

Black impoesy of quantum primitive



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Black hole

The concept of black hole emerged in the late eighteenth century as part of the universal gravitation of Isaac Newton. The question was whether there were any objects whose mass was large enough that their speed of release was greater than the speed of light. These were then objects predicted to be so dense that their speed of release was greater than the speed of light - that is, even light cannot overcome their gravitational force.



Light loses all of its energy trying to break out of a black hole's potential well. However, it is only the beginning of the XXth century with the advent of general relativity by Albert Einstein as the concept of a black hole is more than a curiosity. In astrophysics, a black hole is a massive object whose gravitational field is so intense that it prevents any form of matter or radiation from escaping. Such objects therefore do not emit light and are therefore black. From this characteristic comes the adjective "black", since a black hole cannot emit light. What is valid for light is also valid for matter: no particle can escape from a black hole once captured by it, hence the very appropriate term "hole". The material that is caught by a black hole is heated to considerable temperatures before being swallowed up, also known as an "occluded star." »This indeed stipulates that a rotating body will have a tendency to« drag »space-time in its vicinity. (source wikipedia.org)

The metaphysical revolt of the avant-garde.

Like an eternal silence with no future or hope sounds black inside. (Kandinsky)

In response to the *White Square*, Rodtchenko in ideological opposition to Malevich paints the *Black Square on black*, a real black hole in contemporary art. Subsequently Malevich's *white square on white background* will be regularly splashed with persistent black spots, let's think of Borduas, Hartung and subsequently completely destroyed by Ad Reinhardt's black on black monochrome. Why such an aesthetic and philosophical shift in such a short time?

Our answer, this is our purpose, can arise after an exploration of socio-political and theological terms upon which the emergence of artistic movements at the beginning of the XXth century as a group of autonomous pressures with a mission to rethink new the collective identity of the new man, sole master of his destiny since "God died."

But it is not the fact that God is dead which causes the problem but rather the evidence that even if "God is" it is only that, perpetually phenomenizing, we saw it in Poetics of the primitive quantum; so that God is Uncertainty hence the insurmountable anguish of man. To be modern after quantum mechanics is to understand that all knowledge starts from man himself, whether objective reality either does not exist or as God escapes him completely. And the anguish grows even more when the metaphysical collapse leaves man even more alone in the face of the vertiginous disorder of his world. Since man meets only himself in the Universe, he will strive to go beyond himself. Faced with the apparent void, there is a place to take, but we will see that the atheism of the man who proclaims himself master and possessor of the earth leads to the same dead end.

Humanist atheism.

Atheism is a form of belief opposite to that of religions. But the belief in the non-existence of God is lodged in the same way as that of his existence: faith. In both cases, the common denominator is spirituality. There is therefore no contradiction in speaking of atheistic spirituality in the same way as of "Christian spirituality", of "Jewish spirituality", or of "Islamic spirituality." » Except that atheism is an a-religion because it has neither codes, nor rituals, nor liturgy expressing its belief in a world free from the fires of hell where God is absent.

The concept of atheism as the negation of God arises with Heraclitus of Ephesus. By affirming the cyclical principle effect of the opposition of opposites, he explains that the universe is from all time, from all eternity, uncreated as much of gods as of men. Then comes Xenophanes who denounces the populist gods of these men who give themselves gods in their image, the gods are not human and vice versa. Then, thanks to the observations of Leucippe and his pupil Democritus, the idea of the atom was born. From this brilliant idea emerges the conception of a world entirely subject to the chance of the move-

ment of atoms leaving no room for any creator god or for man. Epicurus, a disciple of Democritus, adopted an integral atomism, the whole Universe is formed of atoms; from this world formed of atomic matter flows a materialist physics in which are born and die world “without a pre-established plan. “

However, contrary to popular belief, atheism and materialism can also give rise to a spiritual experience, radically different from those of classical religions. Zeno, founder of Stoicism and pupil of Crates, introduced the concept of the spirit present in matter. This intelligence, like the atom, is present in all things, so there is an order in nature and this order is the unity of everything. To become one with the whole, to admire its harmony and to tend to it, this is the essence of being. Subsequently, Zeno, affirmed that the world has only one law, that of universal Reason, common to all men. Put an end to separate states and borders so that man can move freely in a universal city governed by mutual and voluntary consent: friendship. The Greek therefore aspires to a blessed, friendly and universal life, such is salvation. (*soteria*) It was the Stoics who popularized the idea dubbed “Hellenic enlightenment” where all men are cosmopolitans, citizens of the world of the universal city.

“In his ideal state, Zeno presented a dazzling hope which, since then, has never left man; he dreamed of a world which would no longer be divided into separate states, but which would form a single great City, under a single divine law where all men would no longer be united by human laws but by their voluntary consent or as expressed Zeno, for love. »(Tarn, Hellenistic Civilization quoted by Eliade)

But a Greek-speaking Jew, Paul of Tarsus, inspired by the Christic story, adapted it to Greek philosophy and exported its precepts. From *soteria*, the doctrine of salvation, Paul explained to the Greeks that they could never achieve it alone. He offers them a *fool*, a Savior who died crucified to free us. The *soteria*, salvation now goes by the Redemption. This breakthrough of Christianity in Hellenic and then Roman soil as a “mystery religion” pushed atheism to its limits and was eclipsed for several centuries from human consciousness, until the Renaissance in fact.

The Dominican monastic Inquisition founded in 1231 by Gregory IX who shed blood to “save” the faithful from heresy, undermined the infallibility of the church. The church arrests, judges and punishes all deviants. Scholar and polyglot John Pic de Mirandole, in addition to Latin and Greek, studied Hebrew and Arabic in Padua with Elie del Médigo who also made him read Aramaic manuscripts. Del Médigo also translates Jewish manuscripts from Hebrew to Latin for Pic. Curious, he discovers Chaldaic books and the writings of Esdras, Zoroaster and Melchior and is initiated into the Jewish mysticism of Kabbalah, which fascinates him, just like the last classical authors of Hermeticism, such as Hermes Trismegistus. His friends nicknamed him the “prince of concord” because his objective was to reconcile the partisans of Plato and those of Aristotle by his 900 theses under the title : *Philosophical, cabalistic and theological conclusions*, reconciling science, philosophy and religion to this that there was the best in his eyes among medieval Jewish and Arab commentators, which earned him to be considered a heretic by Pope

Innocent VIII. This erudition has been poorly regarded since in 180 AD, Irenaeus outlined the accusation of what would become “the” purveyor of all heresy: philosophy. Pic de Mirandole must renounce several of his conclusions, deemed heretical by a papal commission. (Pic de Mirandole, www.wikipedia.org)

The originality of Pic de Mirandole’s theses lies in these few lines : the dignity of man depends on his freedom, he asserts: there is not a human nature first, but a movement, a kind of native power, by which man decides and realizes his essence. This is to say that man is not born a man but becomes one, as if he were his own creator: thereby he derives from God. What makes man specific is his existence, his freedom, this power to give himself, by himself, an essence. To be is therefore to make oneself, to build oneself over the course of our knowledge and experiences. Here then are the precepts of a concept which one named humanism and which will know a phenomenal expansion.

Clandestinely, free thinkers are beginning to speak on condition of anonymity. The Renaissance and the rise of printing contributed to the emergence of a swarm of manuscripts questioning religious beliefs. The most important of them, *Theophrastus redidivus* (1659) is intended to be a historical digest of atheist thinkers. Thus the idea of God comes from fear (“fear creates Gods”, Lucretia), the world is uncreated (Heraclitus), religions are enslaved to superstitions (Epicurus), to live in friendship without harming others. (Zeno) But above all, Europe has just discovered Confucius whose writings show without a shadow of a doubt that man can live morally and honestly without the revelation of a God as a guide.

The *Treaty theological-political* Benedict Spinoza Europe prepares a new interpretation of biblical scriptures. Not only does it affirm the presence of God in the world but also that the purpose of knowledge is to experience the love of God which consists in doing good naturally and not out of fear of evil. And this does not necessarily imply faith in the Bible or the practice of ritual ceremonies. God sees himself as natural light that illuminates our life. God is no longer transcendent but immanent everywhere in nature and we are of the same “Substance”, he explains in *The Ethics* his second volume. Spinoza has just contradicted the entire biblical account of man possessing a soul separated from nature. Now “soul and body are one and the same. The Church reacts violently to these critical writings. Spinoza is declared impious, the immanent God of Spinoza is not the true God, therefore Spinoza must be considered an atheist. Thus one can believe in God while being an atheist, which Bayle, a French scholar, called “virtuous atheism”, an intellectual position which asserts the precedence of individual freedom of conscience over the authority of the church. Bayle challenges the warrior God of the Bible who divides men, who tolerates misfortune in the world, better to deny it. The dilemma described by Epicurus still holds true : a good and powerful God is incompatible with evil. The fundamental evil is not atheism but religious idolatry which leads to fanaticism and the murders of its brothers. (Haffen Marc, Atheism, p.20-114)

Erasmus marked the beginning of the modern era when many independent intellectuals began to circumscribe the influence of religions for war solutions.

Erasmus tried to change the drastic position of the belligerents during the wars of religion. He explains to them that tolerance and dialogue with a view to a common adhesion of men to God are preferable to religious wars. The freedom to choose is the sine qua non of human responsibility and it alone can lead to salvation and peace.

Continuing the fight of Erasmus against warlike theology, learned minds known as “The Enlightenment” attacked the absolutism of the Holy Empire. They were the precursors of modern cosmopolitanism. They ignored borders, rose above states and nations, criticized the powerful and the will to power, bet on reason and tolerance against interests and necessities, on the freedom of the individual against the hegemony of the state. Voltaire is a deist, he believes like Kant that God is necessary for man to regulate human passions (“If God did not exist, he would have to be invented”) but he is also irreligious because he vigorously defended the dream of social peace, harmony and tolerance, all three threatened by the intransigence of monotheistic religions. He much preferred the tolerance of the polytheistic religions of the Greeks and Romans to the fanaticism of the Jews, Muslims and Christians.

In his *Essays*, Montaigne also declared that war, “glorified as the highest and most solemn of human actions” is only “the testimony of our idiocy and our imperfection”, stigmatizing with the most extreme indignation “The science of killing and annihilating ourselves, of ruining and destroying our own race” in which “even wild animals cannot imitate us.” “

Quietly minds converge towards an enlightened humanism. Zénon’s civic ethic is reborn, driven by the ardent desire to improve the human condition. “Have the courage to use your own understanding!” This is the motto of the “Enlightenment” according to Kant. The Scottish philosopher David Hume then noted that religious morality aggravates the evil that it is supposed to diminish. Following this discrediting of religions, the secularization of society is underway.

One of the greatest defenders of the temporal to the detriment of the spiritual is La Mettrie, who advocated radical atheism. Man is only a machine of organized and moving matters. This mechanical materialism is metamorphosed under the pen of Diderot into an organic materialism wanting to recreate the unity of man with nature. Since nature is in perpetual becoming all species including man are transitory, only history is perpetuated from generation to generation, the story of the human adventure. Humanity supplanted God as the supreme value, birth of humanist atheism. Man then risked falling into the trap of self-deification. The idea of man God, as seed in the earth, began to germinate and proliferate. (Haffen Marc, *L’Athéisme*, p.115-139)

No one could have suspected then that human history is so closely linked to that of the hominids. With Darwin, genetics supplants the Bible as a metaphysical response to man’s questioning of his past and his future. Man becomes the product of his acquisitions by evolution and no longer the Being of the creator.

“As many more individuals of each species are born than can survive; as, con-

sequently, the struggle for existence is renewed every moment, it follows that any being who varies somewhat in a way which is beneficial to him, has a greater chance of survival; this being is thus the object of a natural selection.” (Darwin Charles, *The Origin of Species*)

Evolution, by separating the good bread from the tares, will lead the species, thanks to the progress of science and technology, to its accomplishment. Once again, God gives way to man. In *The Descent of Man*, then in a sequel, *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), Darwin pushed evolutionary logic very far. He thus lays the theoretical foundations of what has been called “social Darwinism”, “according to which human society is governed by the same laws of selection as the rest of nature and, in particular, as commercial competition, colonialism, and the extermination of certain “races” only translate the “natural” triumph of the strongest over the weakest. “ The main representative of Social Darwinism is the Englishman Herbert Spencer. (1820-1903)

“Social Darwinism affirms that competition, the struggle for life, affects, within the human species, the different social groups that make it up (family, ethnic, state) in such a way that hierarchies are created, which are the result of a social selection which allows the best to win. However, for Spencer, all social groups being in competition with each other, anything that can weaken a social group benefits its competitors. Consequently, Spencer thinks that any artificial protection of the weak is a handicap for the social group to which they belong, insofar as this protection has the effect of making the functioning of the group more difficult and, therefore, of placing it in a position of inferiority. facing rival social groups. “(Denis Touret)

Henceforth individual salvation passes through social status; having replacing being. The abstraction of the afterlife as an existential finality with the sacrifices and renunciations that it imposes to access it is evacuated in favor of a more pragmatic and earthly finality: materialism as the fulfillment of being on Earth. The businessman, the industrialist, the financier are its evangelists. By contagion, materialism spread at the speed of a pandemic in all social strata. Only the elite, the best, will have access to the Eden of success. Access to materialist Eden goes of course through the appropriation of the goods of the earth and will result in a very significant fact which further increased the social division: access to Eden is transmissible by inheritance. We can inherit Heaven on Earth by blood ties, from man to man. “The hominization of nature” (anthropocentrism) associated with the “law of the strongest” become the foundations of both modern theology of man-god and of capitalism.

The materialist theology of the man-god is, as we see, a complete abnegation of the Christian values of Christianity supported as much by the Catholic Church as Protestant and Anglican.

“Thus Christianity will have been the religion of the coming out of religion. »(Michel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World*, p, 1)

A tragic vision of earthly life settled down to the point of wishing it to be as brief as possible, in short, life is a disease, a sin, theologians will say, symbol-

ized by the original fall of the newborn into the world living. When God himself is in the image of man, when the content of the Bible, the Koran, the Torah, is written and interpreted by men, “then they are sources of neurosis because these texts are essentially based (fatally) on anguish, fear, lack of confidence in human nature, contempt for the body, sexuality and women. “(Solignac)

The priests, the rabbis, the ulemas, these “poisoners of life”, like parasites living on fear and guilt in man, have spread like a pandemic the virus of a vengeful and wicked God who never stops. to belittle men and divide them among themselves. By constantly using God as a moral argument and a justification for tribal superiority, religious institutions have engendered a negative conception, an unhappy consciousness of humanity, that of the mediocre, suffering man, the very type of decadence and decay. weakness.

This is the essence of nihilism noted by Nietzsche. By announcing the death of God, Nietzsche rebels precisely against this moral and tribal god. So the full quote from Nietzsche reads : “God is dead ! God remains dead ! And we killed him ! »(Le Gai savoir in Œuvres, p. 104-105)

But man is incapable of living in doubt, he needs a seat. Man abhors a vacuum. Nietzsche came to fill this loophole by making the apology of the powerful and proud man without suspecting that the grandiose model of the superman that he has just created risked to drag freedom into absolute totalitarianism. Because before the reign of the superman must come the “last man”, the one whose crisis of sense of values must contaminate the whole society and its institutions.

In a coup, one replaces the king by another, a president, a prime minister by another, one usurps the title, the concept, the representation, the idea. But ideas do not die, they are; we can affirm them or deny them, not kill them. To announce the death of God is to pour emptiness into nothingness. No death, rather usurpation by the Promethean man of power from the Gods; the divine has only “changed its skin.” By stripping the ancient gods of their attributes, an unprecedented sense of freedom invaded human consciousness where certainty was manifested. Since the first certainty is that of my existence revealed by consciousness, by thought (I think therefore I am) and that nothingness, infinity, nature, cannot think, then “I”, my consciousness of to be, is the fulcrum of all knowledge. It is through my consciousness that the world, galaxies, planets, nature, the other exist. Descartes had just placed man again on the throne of the universe and restored man to an anthropocentric position. Descartes’ metaphysical revolution allowed man to rise above nature by giving him the right to dominate it like a demiurge. This certainty of the man-god will be the Achilles heel of Western modernity.

Usurping the power of creation from God, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, became the demiurges of modernity, the instigators of the “metaphysical coup” leading to the divination of man. A new world view called “materialist” proclaimed that matter is the only substance, the sole reason for being and for knowledge. By giving matter a spontaneous creative force and considering movement as its vital act, the reborn materialism joined the Epicurean precepts of ancient Greece that Engels will update by writing : “that the mind is itself only the product the

highest of matter. “

Modern technique in this context is partly explained as the Western willful realization of the Christian dogma of man’s transcendence vis-à-vis nature and his legitimate desire to dominate it. The incarnation of man is only possible if God is expelled from the world. The expulsion of God will be the metaphysical coup d’état of modernity. God expelled Adam and Eve from paradise, Descartes and Galileo expelled God from the earth, man replaced him. Thanks to science and technology, modern man, this new demiurge, was to lead barbarian humanity to the Promised Land. Man sublimates his inferiority complex vis-à-vis God into a powerful megalomania: Man will be the creator of the universe, his universe. He created the machine in his image: the divine order succeeded the human order.

The extreme tension noticeable since the beginning of XXth century have upset all the achievements of civilization. Whether in science, art, politics, a wind of incredible revolt blew. A new world seemed to dawn on the horizon, the revolution was on everyone’s lips. But all these changes could have taken place only because they were carried by an important metaphysical dimension which included a project of soteriological society of the new man; that is to say that they all proposed, whether in art, cubism, suprematism, constructivism, productivism, surrealism, whether positivism in science, whether communism, nazism , fascism and even liberalism, all metaphysically supported a doctrine of the salvation of humanity by the incarnation of a new savior. We do not so easily shed two millennia of Christic messianism. Malevich, but also Delaunay, Kandinsky, Mondrian, De Chirico and even Breton were fervent metaphysicians.

“It is not only science and technology that modernity was inspired. It was also, it was above all perhaps, a whole spiritualist syncretism which fed on what is most contrary to reason. Theosophy and anthroposophy, no doubt, but also spiritualism, occultism, dialogue with the deceased, belief in invisible worlds, in mysterious radiations, in paranormal forces, in parallel universes. (...) None of the great names of modernity, from Kupka to Kandinsky, from Mondrian to Malevich, from Duchamp to André Breton, emerged unscathed from this fascination which shows that symbolism did not die in 1900. A whole worrying esoteric nebula, where we find the belief in paranormal powers, the taste for palingenesis (reincarnation) and eschatologies (ultimate vision of man and the universe), but also the belief in the manipulation of the masses by the occult power of a few initiates, magi, masters and “leaders” (Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin), obscures the brilliance of the Enlightenment that modernity was supposed to increase. »(Jean Clair, The responsibility of the artist, p.17-18) (The words in brackets are ours.)

Most artistic movements also converged on a total commitment to destruction and annihilation as an expression of anger and latent frustrations. In fact, the artists were responding to the call probably of the oldest myth of humanity, that of the periodic regeneration of the world that we find everywhere, in all archaic, traditional and now modern societies, “the eternal return” so dear to Nietzsche. This need to completely renew the world in which we live corresponds perfectly

to the revolutionary spirit of the time in all fields, whether in science, art or politics : the annihilation of the old world is imperative to the coming of new times.

Thus the influence of theosophy on the European spirit of the time is undeniable. The Theosophical Society which embodies this influence was founded in New York in 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. Tinted with occultism and oriental mysticism, this neo-spiritualism consisted in promoting the education of a “new original race” endowed with psychic powers transmitted to the chosen ones, the elect, the initiated.

“But when mankind, rapidly increasing in number, also saw the variety of idiosyncrasies of body and mind increase, the incarnate Spirit began to show its weakness. Natural exaggerations, along with superstitions, took birth in the less cultivated and less healthy minds. Selfishness arose out of passions and desires hitherto unknown, and knowledge and power were too often abused to the point that it became necessary to limit the number of *those who knew* . Thus was born the Initiation. (Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 5, p. 286-287)

In his book *The Secret Doctrine* , Blavatsky proposes a complex cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis, which draws on the sacred texts of Hinduism, Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese Taoism and Arab-Persian and Eastern occult traditions which collide with the Western discoveries of modern science. Its ambitious program can be summed up as follows : “to show that Nature is not” a fortuitous competition of atoms ”and to assign man his real place in the plane of the Universe; to save from degradation the archaic truths which are the basis of all religions; discover to a certain extent the fundamental unity from which all have sprung...”(Blavatsky, *La doctrine secrète, Cosmogénèse*, vol.1, p.xi)

It is thus significant to learn that in 1909 Mondrian was a member of the Theosophical Society and that Kandinsky in his book *Du spirituel dans l'art* praised Mme Blavatsky, whose movement he considered a “powerful leaven. spiritual. »Inspired by this, Kandinsky is convinced that only a science of art will be able to reach the domains of« Unity »,« Human »and« Divine »and will synthesize them.

But arguably the most compelling work of mystical literature is *Cosmic Consciousness* , written by Canadian physician Richard Maurice Bucke, which has become a classic of the genre. At the age of 36, Bucke would have lived a metaphysical experience of a mystical order which “enabled him to understand that humanity was moving, slowly, towards a higher state by means of a great psychic revolution, as fundamental as the one that had gradually separated animals from humans. He believed that, since the beginnings of known history to mankind, a few elect had inherited this “cosmic consciousness” during an Enlightenment; these beings constituted the body of pioneers which announced a race to come. »(Leclerc Denise, *The Crisis of Abstraction in Canada*, p.41)

Bucke's book was a resounding international success and inspired the *Tertium Organum* of the Russian writer PD Ouspensky who was passionate about theosophy. This great scientist endowed with advanced mathematical talents took

again the ideas of the cosmic evolution put forward by Bucke and transposed them to the pictorial level; the great scholar was also a painter. All the essentials that includes art as abstract new art of the XXth century are combined in his work and pushed to the extreme by Malevich: abandonment of any discursive logic, exclusive affirmation of the plane-surface defense of pure form and formal experience. The aesthetic differences between Kandinsky, Mondrian and Malevich in no way contradict their common spiritualist lineage : a theosophy of infinite space as a science of art.

The common denominator of all political movements, science and art of the early XXth century was the desire of the Revolution. Who says revolution says rupture! It is now inevitable that the artistic finality must merge with the revolutionary finality. We expected the social revolution to give all citizens the material means to finally devote themselves to poetry and aspire to “the art of living.” The change, the revolution, were on everyone's lips.

**“Oh how sad this world is, how sad is nothing and how bad is world.”
(Trakl)**

Expressionism is the cry of solitary men in this “rotten West” by machinist civilization. Ancestors, let's name Munch, Ensor, Nolde but also a fascination for Rimbaud, Hölderlin, Nietzsche and Dostoïevski. Profound transformations are shaking Europe, brutal industrialization and the rural exodus make cities grow



in a dazzling way with its cohorts of unemployed. Everything becomes problematic: the technique is scary, the administration scares, hatred scares. Flee cursed civilization like their contemporary Gauguin and Rimbaud before.

The sociologist Le Ridier will observe that the end of the XIXth century corresponds to the appearance of “the chronic crisis of identity”, questions of identity of expressionist artists which will subsequently win over all individuals, a movement which will span the entire following century. till today.

Feelings such as inner turmoil, anguish, guilt, agony, distress will be used to speak of the decline of a dying society and to describe personal unease and civilizational failure since classical Greece. The quest for oneself staging personal dilemmas in the face of the ambient cacophony is at the heart of the process of individuation underway. Nietzsche spoke of a “savage existential anger” that ran through the entire artistic revolution of the twentieth century.

The desire for revolution giving new meaning to life materialized in the “passion to be oneself”. The mood of the time is for anarchy. It begins with Fichte and the German romantics, with the affirmation of an autonomous subject and absolutely free to self-create: “With the free being, conscious of oneself, a whole world appears at the same time - starting from the nothing ”. Historian Hubert van den Berg first reminds us that in Europe, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, anarchism was a powerful political current which competed with the social democratic parties. The writ-

ings of anarchists enjoyed an important audience in European intellectual circles. There was therefore a climate conducive to the emergence of a new movement which would inseparably combine political revolt and artistic expression of a new order.

It is in this social and political atmosphere that the protest against the expressionist movement arises. The links between expressionists and anarchists were numerous. It should be noted from the outset that German Expressionism was never a school like French Symbolism or a structured group like Italian Futurism or Russian Constructivism. Expressionism is an idealistic, romantic movement that will serve as an energy catalyst for a youth in turmoil fighting the chaotic brutality of the world. Expressionism is above all a contestation of the world carried by common themes as much in painting, theater, literature as in poetry centered around the urban man petrified in frightening cities where the craziest despair arouses an irrational hope. imbued with idealism and mysticism embodied in anarchy.



Without God or master, expressionism is above all an attitude of revolt, the cry (Munch) of despair of a whole youth living in the “cancer huts” that the cities have become. “Sick dwellings” (Wolfenstein), “evil city” (Salus), “sprawling cities” (Verhaeren). Cities are the bloody theater of the contemporary apocalypse. The cities driven by savage liberalism and unrestrained industrialization offer the morbid spectacle of dilapidated districts with canals carrying refuse of all kinds where rotting human rags inhaling the stale air of chimneys spewing ash and death ; madness prowls everywhere.

Schelling said in *The Ages of the World* that “anguish is the fundamental feeling of every living creature.” Man becomes responsible for social decadence signs of his inner and existential ugliness. Expressionist artists were able to grasp the absurdity of our existence; they participated in his despair. Art then

becomes “the last metaphysical revolt within nihilism”. (Benn) Like hallucinated poets with lyrical and incantatory pathos, they did not hesitate to represent the dramas of life and to express their pain in their work. Pacifism is one of the major themes of expressionist artists and poets. Everyone saw the First World War as a real apocalypse, the collapse of European culture into barbarism.

Both the attraction of the picturesque over the decadent, the attraction of spontaneity instead of constraint, the artists also participate in this great movement of emancipation, including Kirchner, who thus wrote the expressionist program for the 1906 exhibition : “Having faith in a new generation of creators and enjoyers, we call on all the youth to come together as bearers of the future ”. Inspired by the garish colors of unrelated Fauvism, the expressionist artist attempts to express the psychological tensions experienced by youth in the face of the world.

This foreboding is linked to the awareness of decline and death and finds its release in the expectation of a new man; the deepest despair rubs shoulders with the highest messianism. From a palette of colors in violent contrasts emerge helpless human figures linked to the social tensions of the time. At the same time, synchronicity obliges, Sigmund Freud deepens, in the isolation of his office, the analysis of the neuroses that he observes in his patients like the expressionist paintings. Both expressionism and Freudian psychoanalysis highlighted the role of human drives, mainly the death drive heralding the unprecedented violence of the two world wars.

The survivors will be divided. For several artists, the intoxication of the “disturbance of the senses” was quickly followed by depression and existential doubt, some will go towards socialism or pacifism while others dreaming of new men will give their support to messianic visions of fascism, nazism and communism. The most intransigent poured into anarchy and declared war on this rotten civilization which allowed such butchery and many sank into mysticism. This “lost generation” was also lost in Dada nihilism. Sensing the confusion of beings and the noise of boots announcing another great butchery war, artists, painters, writers presenting themselves as “primitive mercenaries in the modern world” howled in vain like wolves before disappearing crushed by stupidity and hatred.

The “expressionist” spirit of destruction of the old order gained more and more ground. The first exhibition of the Fauves in Paris caused a scandal, just like the cubist deconstructions of the human figure by Picasso associated with atonal music by Schoenberg, a real revolution in the history of music by proposing to replace the seven notes of the scale by twelve semitones. His musical system called “dodecaphonism” introduces an equally radical break for Western thought as pictorial abstraction and quantum equations. A new world was to emerge from the ruins of the old.



Destroy, deconstruct, put an end to the backward-looking order of ruins and decadent museums; even the present has value only because it is a necessary step to reach the goal. New century, new technique, new civilization, new city, social novelty of the urban masses, for the first time, the mechanical order becomes the ideology of the “new Jerusalem.”

The industrial art embodied by the futurist movement is an open war against the institutional immobility of bourgeois society. They imagined a mystique of the new man transfigured by a “total art” of the civilization to come singing the glory of machinery and of the industrial object as the foundation of the new universal city. The same year 1909, Marinetti published *Malarka le futuriste* where the artist finally delivers his prophetic vision of a mechanical and winged superman. This Icarian man-god is at the heart of the futuristic cosmogony where the body is fantasized as the “glorious body” of the mystical machinist and driven by her desire to exalt industrial progress. It was in 1910, in the review *La Demolizione* that he *delivered* his sermon on the new religion of violence, the only one capable of preventing Italy from sinking into “lazy egoism (of the proletariat), economic (liberalism), in the miserliness of the spirit (anarchism) and the will. (democracy)” (the words in parenthesis are ours)

Industrial expansion, the exploration of new markets, the exploitation of colonial resources, panacea to heal the wounds of the 14-18 war, sow the tragic euphoria of overproduction with the consequence of the stock market crash of 1929. The “crowds without God” (Camus) invaded the towns. All the relationships of neighborhood, solidarity, family cohesion, fundamental values of the rural world, shattered into a thousand crumbs with the advent of mass society in metropolises with failing and often inadequate structures. Industrialization and the economy in general have difficulty absorbing this large flow of underprivileged people wandering in the cities like “shadows without love who dragged themselves on the ground...” (Apollinaire)

Psychological anxiety and financial uncertainty generate frustrations resulting in increasingly anarchic disorders. Threatened in his identity by the too rapid massification, the man, psychically broken down, sees his life opening up to emptiness and the dreaded nothingness. Nihilism is gaining ground with its share of famines and uncontrollable conflicts. Man discovers a solitary self ready for anything. The individualism of each for himself mobilizes the interior revolt of the wounded being while the apprehended insurrection against order, duty, work and authority looms. More and more, the disillusioned eyes of the working masses are turning to the East, to revolutionary Russia.



In the name of Nietzschean rhetoric advocating forward-looking violence, Marinetti sought to merge the revolt of futurist artists with the fascist aspirations of Mussolini for whom war represents the historic opportunity to sweep away the old world, with its decadent politicians. The Futurists were the most stubborn supporters of “war until final victory.” “They have never ceased to extol war, that” war was the only hygienic remedy for the universe. This cult of violence among them affirms the conviction that violence and “the laws of war are the engine of history.” »(Marx) Works with evocative titles such as *The charge of cavalry* (Boccioni) or *Canons in action* (Severini) attest to this. If for astrophysics a black hole can be considered as the final stage of a collapse then the analogy between black hole and totalitarian dictatorship as collapse of freedoms is adequate. Italy must reconnect with the glorious past of ancient Rome “by means of the same dictatorship that the Romans of the First Republic set up at critical times in their history. “(La tenda, Il Popolo d’Italia, October 11, 1917)

The October 1917 revolution in Russia by introducing another socio-economic reference code stoked national tensions to a climax. Because this victory of the peasants and the proletarians comes to crown nearly a millennium of heretical protest. During the years of “heroic communism” (1918-1928), the Russian people understood that artists were full citizens, ending their isolation as experienced in capitalist societies. The street became the laboratory of these builders. Revolutionary art must be socially active and “must not reflect, imagine or interpret but truly *construct in* order to prove that art is not futile and contemptible entertainment. (Tchernichevski) Art is henceforth called, no longer to represent but to change humanity.

And the machine will be a liberating force. Alexéi Gan’s *Constructivist Manifesto* (1920) proclaims the glory of technology against the speculative activity of art. Its slogan “Art is dead! Long live the art of the machine” clearly indicates the purpose of the movement. The works of art from past centuries are the relics of a dead religion and the museums of places of worship without rituals. The Russian avant-garde waged a merciless propaganda war against bourgeois art. For them, the European artist, despite his opposition to bourgeois values, nonetheless remains dependent on the same mode of production and the work of art as a commodity only “ratifies the bourgeois fact in art.” (Adorno) Beyond plastic considerations, genres and models, it is indeed the very institution of art and its market in bourgeois society that is called into question in Russia. It will be up to Rodtchenko to declare the death of “easel painting” whose political corollary was the death of capitalism. Indeed, we must not forget that the birth certificate of the work of art, of the painting, as private property coincides with the arrival of capitalism in Protestant Europe of the North.

Rodtchenko also claimed, an important metaphysical dimension, non-figuration with his black on black series including the *Black Square* as an exploration of nothingness in opposition to the concept of infinity attributed to Malevich’s *White Square on White Background*. Rodchenko’s “black on black” also wants to be a complete break with the metaphysical research of previous artists and is presented as the triumph of atheistic materialism. With the exhibition, in 1921,

of three monochrome paintings, yellow, red blue, Rodchenko declared the death of Christianity, the yellow red blue triptych of Christian inspiration is empty and marks the failure of the holy trinity as icon of the salvation of soul and redemption by the erasure of their representation.

Since prehistoric times that man is dominated by nature, here has come the blessed time when humanity can finally free itself from its enslavement thanks to the energy of mechanical rhythm, the only one capable of competing with its enemy vigil by giving it the possibility of creating a world where he will be the master. All the “revolutionary” arts identified with the idealization of the machine and precipitated nature towards its downfall. This apology for the technique favored an equally exponential progression of pollution. Both God and nature died at the same time.

It must be remembered that Cubism, Futurism, Suprematism and Constructivism all show a positivist view of science and technology. Thus cubism, although revolutionary for the time, nevertheless remained attached to the old values of Newtonian science and a prisoner of figurative “geometrism”. Cubist bodies deconstructed into juxtaposed segments offer the asymmetrical vision of a body-machine (Descartes), assembly of detached parts in a discontinuous world, Futurism glorifies the movement and speed of mechanized objects, Suprematism celebrates the victory of the man on nature, abstract thought on reality, while constructivism ennoble the machine as an icon of a new world.

Faced with the artistic jumble of the various avant-gardes, from cubico-futurism to suprematism, technicism appeared more and more as the only regulatory model capable of restoring order. This transformation went through the way of life, through everyday life, through everything related to habits of living and thinking, to aesthetic tastes. It was necessary to break a tribal mentality, resistant to the changes brought about by urbanization, science and technology. In addition, “building” takes on its full meaning in a poor and rural country where the civil war, since 1880, had worsened a housing crisis. The revolution needed to invent a new way of life, in new towns for the emancipation of the new man with a global vision of a total break with the old world. For Tatlin, the foundations of Russian avant-garde art based on the concepts of “matter, volume and construction” put forward as early as 1914, were the real precursors of the Great Political Revolution of October 1917. The canvas, the colors, the brushes, the easels, “useless and old-fashioned tools” according to Tatlin, must be replaced by “real materials in real space. “

Thus theorists, architects, designers of industrial objects, photographers, painters and sculptors concretely undertook to change mentalities and the living environment. The pride of the proletariat was to be concretely visualized in healthy housing, in working-class housing estates that guaranteed order and morality. True apostles of community life, they explored the technical possibilities offered through personal experiences leading to reconciling man and machine, industrial work and personal creativity in order to achieve the radiant communist future freed from the yoke of exploitation. (Voldman) The October Revolution of 1917 fulfilled the almost Messianic prophecy of a new order. Avant-garde artists took charge of the reorganization of artistic life.

“We don’t need a mausoleum of art where dead works are worshiped, but a living factory of the human spirit - in the streets, in the streetcars, in factories, in workshops and in the homes of the workers. “(Mayakovsky)

The architectural form of railway stations, ports, houses and public buildings, there were, according to de Chirico fascinated by town planning, the first foundations of a great metaphysical aesthetic. The squares were decorated with futurist sculptures and served as a backdrop for “heroic-revolutionary” shows while the poet Mayakovsky conducted symphonies of factory sirens while trains painted (graffiti) with revolutionary slogans left the big cities to propagate the good news in the countryside in addition to sending art magazines and propaganda newspapers.

Such an effervescence of artistic creation naturally aroused the curiosity of Europe. One year after the lifting in 1921 of the economic blockade imposed by the Allies, the Van Diemen Gallery in Berlin presented the largest exhibition on the European scene of the Russian avant-garde. Throughout Western Europe, artists discovered, with amazement for some and delight for the most part, the dazzling vivacity of expression of Russian art from the first works of artists of the *Art World of the* 1890s to recent years. constructivism creations of the 1920s (Camilia Gray, *The Russian avant-garde...*, p. 220-224 and 275-276)

When Braque and Picasso, the first to be followed by Schwitters and the Merz movement, introduce external objects (cigarette packets, labels, newspaper clippings, etc.) into the composition (collage) of their painting, they are far from suspecting that the object thus revealed will be transformed to the point of vampirizing modern art. This “anti-art” gesture of the manufactured object that has become a work of art, will become, ironically, the gesture carrying a new conception of art. Henceforth, man like God is creator of universe, nature will be reformed subject to the creative impetus of the artist obsessed with the idealized object. But it is also a political gesture of diversion. While Russian ideology required the artist to produce utilitarian objects, to submit art to production, Duchamp, out of Dadaist mockery, decided to de facto transform the machined object (bicycle wheel and urinal) into a work of art. art affirming the autonomous character of art. In this sense, Duchamp’s *ready-made* is an essentially “constructivist” act .

“From the moment when a bicycle wheel mounted on a stool could reach the rank of a work of art, the technical mastery and virtuosity which had always presided over artistic production were suddenly devalued, while the artist himself acquired a Promethean stature. The creator was endowed with an all-powerful authority, which allowed him to reduce to nothing, by an ironic, even blasphemous attitude, any form of artistic or social rule. “ (Sylvia Ferrari, *Guide to the art of the 20th century*, p.14)

With the readymade and constructivism, the metaphysical coup d’état of the demiurge man was expressed in the possibilities offered by the exponential growth of technology while an almost religious reforming and social ambition was affirmed through art. , in the east (constructivism, productivism, socialistic realism) as in the west (futurism, *ready-made* , pop art). Capitalism and

Communism are obsessed with the machinist conquest. But it was the early Communists who were the first to understand the immense ideological power of the machined object. While Duchamp caused a scandal in Europe and America with his “artistic baptism of the serial object”, revolutionary Russia unreservedly adopted the art of building a new world integrating the machined works of a new living society. in new cities.

Modernity places the very idea of destruction at the heart of the redefinition of art. This desire to make a clean sweep was exercised at each level of the creative act: destitution of traditional subjects of art, dislocation of the figure, shattering and blurring of the plan and the perspective ... artistic object in Russia in particular will completely upset the history of art.

During the XIth Congress of the Bolshevik Party (1922), Lenin announced the new political economy that allows free trade and competition between the nationalized companies and capitalist enterprises and thus opens the door to advertising. Two illustrious artists then stood out : the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky and the painter Alexander Rodtchenko. They will produce several commercial posters for state-owned department stores, but above all, they will understand the immense persuasive power of the text-image tandem associated with advertising in a poorly educated society. Mayakovsky understood very well that the slogan has its own poetry, that the shorter it is, the better it is understood and likely to be repeated. In short, a good slogan is “the only form of propaganda that creates propagandists.” (Reboul, in Art and Publicity , p.90)

The interest of an image lies for him more in its form than in the subject represented. Always in search of a graphic research in his images, Rodchenko crops, recuts, glues images. He produced numerous posters anchored in the political reality of the USSR at the time. In line with the orientations of the Communist Party, Rodtchenko knows and exploits the importance of the image for propaganda and to convey an ideology. Rodchenko excelled in typography and graphics as well as photography and developed a new genre : photomontage.

“I support the thesis according to which the question of the figurative artistic creation of the proletariat in the period of transition is that of the art of propaganda, and this, not only by the themes, but also by the processes of shaping the material . These processes of an industrial nature, suitable for mass distribution, are posters, illustrations, photography and film editing. »(Arvatov cited in Art and Publicity, p.281)

More and more the idea appears that advertising, slogan, propaganda are capable of breaking down resistance. For that, you have to play tricks. The montages and collages made by Rodchenko, Moholy-Nagy and Heartfield fueled a new artistic phenomenon that would influence the entire artistic production of the XXth century : the diversion

“The aesthetic of the diversion took hold the day Picasso and Braque decided to integrate newspaper or wallpaper as is into their paintings, instead of painting them. We began to make works entirely composed of recovered paper (col-

lages), then recovered objects (assemblies), and finally cut-out photos. (photomontages) The process is always analogous : we borrow, or rather we steal an object, a piece of reality, of which we make all or part of a work of art. “(Martin in Art and Publicity, p.23-24)

Images or diverted objects such as “ready-made” offer the artist the possibility of creating an infinite number of new aesthetic discourses. The reality thus cut out and assembled in a clever montage will make the art of diversion the precursor of any propaganda that goes far beyond the visual arts.

There can be no doubt that there are truly spirits eager for freedom who expressed themselves through the constructivist movement, including Eisenstein, who went so far as to promote “revolution within revolution.” Too free for some, the artist / messiah of a new world will see his revolutionary ecstasy overthrown by the new totalitarian gods. (Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini) Thus the films of Eisenstein were blacklisted, Malevich disowned and finally the poet Mayakovsky seeing his revolutionary ideals betrayed committed suicide in 1930.

Because the essence of any ideological system is to divert, by recovering to better trivialize innovative, especially subversive discoveries in all fields - culture, art, history, sciences - the better to render them harmless. When totalitarian rulers seize knowledge, it turns into ideology in their hands, into a harmful argument against man himself.

Lenin understood the dangerous libertarian and anarchist message sent to him by the youth and artists of the New Man such as the Constructivists and developed a program for the indoctrination of young people in schools : the Octobrians (young people aged 8 to 10 years), the Pioneers (10 to 14-15 years old), the Komosols. (from 14 to 25 years old) He hastened to create, in 1917, the movement “agit-prop”, a name formed from the contraction of two words “agitation” and “propaganda”. It was a collective of young artists under the leadership of the Komosol (Communist Youth League) who used artistic expression, mainly engaged theater and oriented poetry for the purposes of propaganda of ideology. Communist.

Henceforth, the artist can only work on the building and glorification of Communism (Russia), Nazism (Germany), Fascism (Italy), Maoism (China); further reinforcing the tendencies of the subjugation of art to the demands of politics: No art outside the state. Disowned by the Stalinist regime and its “productivist” propaganda orientation, Malevich was forced, for food purposes, to take up the paintbrushes again and painted portraits of families who had become associated with power and from 1928 until his death in 1933, the most legendary of abstract painters composed the major part of his figurative works of cubist structures.

This return to order of the artist has been perpetuated throughout the history of art: each time the artist tried to create the autonomy of art, to create a power or against -power as powerful as politics and religion, it was immediately recovered or banned by them. The artist must be at the service of the reign of ideology and the work of art, affirm the values of power, those which serve for its

domination.

The Bolshevik artist also became a producer, director and founder. He will not only find new objects for everyday life, but found a way of life as a whole by the realization of his objects. The artist-priest of the bourgeois elites must give way to the artist-worker in the service of the proletarian mass, the elite of tomorrow.

Russian industrialization adopted five-year plans focused on the development of production. The artists were charged not only to propagate the new but especially to participate in it by developing programs for the creation of new furniture, furnishings, crockery, clothes. "Give new forms! Scream objects. Mayakovsky wrote.

Artistic creation therefore required new production methods. It was up to the painter Tatlin to establish the new parameters breathing new life into technical methods by creating rational and aesthetically adapted objects to his function; Tatlin called at the time this artistic activity the "culture of materials", and the poet Mayakovsky "the cult of objects" what we will call design later.

The Russian avant-garde as a call for freedom lasted barely fifteen years to be subsequently taken over by the state, first as a tool of ideological propaganda with the Revolution of 1917 and secondly, around 1925 with productivism, where art became associated with the effort of material production in order to promote economic development. On the other hand, Russian artists understood that a new world, industrial and urban, commanded an art adapted to the sociological phenomenon of the nascent popular mass, mainly urban. The shape of the object had to respond to the function it had to perform, if necessary, at the request of the people and the context in which the object will take place. The artists will maximize the functions of the objects in order to make them efficient. The artist became a character merging art and technique, the artist / engineer. Thus, productivist art appears as the faithful image of factory work, the standards and values of which it perpetuates : avant-garde art is transformed into a kind of perpetual work, a kind of staging of the work. mechanical action of the working mass.

We can almost already say that we are not witnessing a desacralization of art but an atheistic sacralization of contemporary art in the service of communist absolutism. Not only will machinery transform nature, but man "will build a new world belonging to him alone": a new materialist messianism has just been born and this spectacle could not leave political power abroad indifferent.

Dogmatic atheism.

Can atheism possibly be religious? Atheism becomes religious when it falls into the trap of dogmatism inherent in all religion : to embody the only possible way of access to the spiritual . He puts on the robe of orthodoxy, so to speak. Having started by fighting against the most oppressive forms of the religious order, atheism insidiously acquires the attributes mainly the desire to save humanity and the promise of a promised land without God. The unbeliever then

becomes a "messianic" atheist convinced of his saving mission.

The theologian Jacques Ellul, in *The New Possessed* , goes there with an inescapable demonstration where he demonstrates the spectacular entry of politics into the religious universe despite the atheistic discourse of certain society, a phenomenon which he qualified as "political religions. "

"Ideologies have multiplied with the development of nations, of modern states and of the democratic system, but then there appeared ideologies of a particular type, with "Marxism-leninism-Stalinism" and with Hitlerism; they entered directly, explicitly in competition with Christianity, claimed to be superior to the transcendent religions and to replace them. But this corresponded to the crisis and the decline of Christianity. These ideologies then in reality assumed the functions and characteristics of these religions, and especially of Christianity. They have become like a kind of substitute. »(Jacques Ellul, *The New Possessed*, p.258)

Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, for their part, understood the immense power over the masses that religion possesses. It was Engels who was the first to analyze in *The Peasants' War* (1850) that several heretical currents of the Middle Ages were the precursors of modern socialism. After the Protestant Reformation, a certain Thomas Münzer separated from Luther and joined the revolt of the German peasants in 1525. Described by Engels as "prophet of the Revolution", Münzer restored Christian millenarianism to its glory. For him, if God is perfect, the man and the woman born in his image are equally so. No more need for baptism, since Jesus delivered us from sin, to be honest, no longer need also for the Church since Jesus freed us from slavery and asked us to build a just society while awaiting his return. And Engels continues: "for him, the Kingdom of God is nothing other than a society where there would be no class difference, no private property, no coercive power independent of the members of society. "

Here is the portrait of Thomas Muenzer as compiled by Engels in the *War of the peasants* :

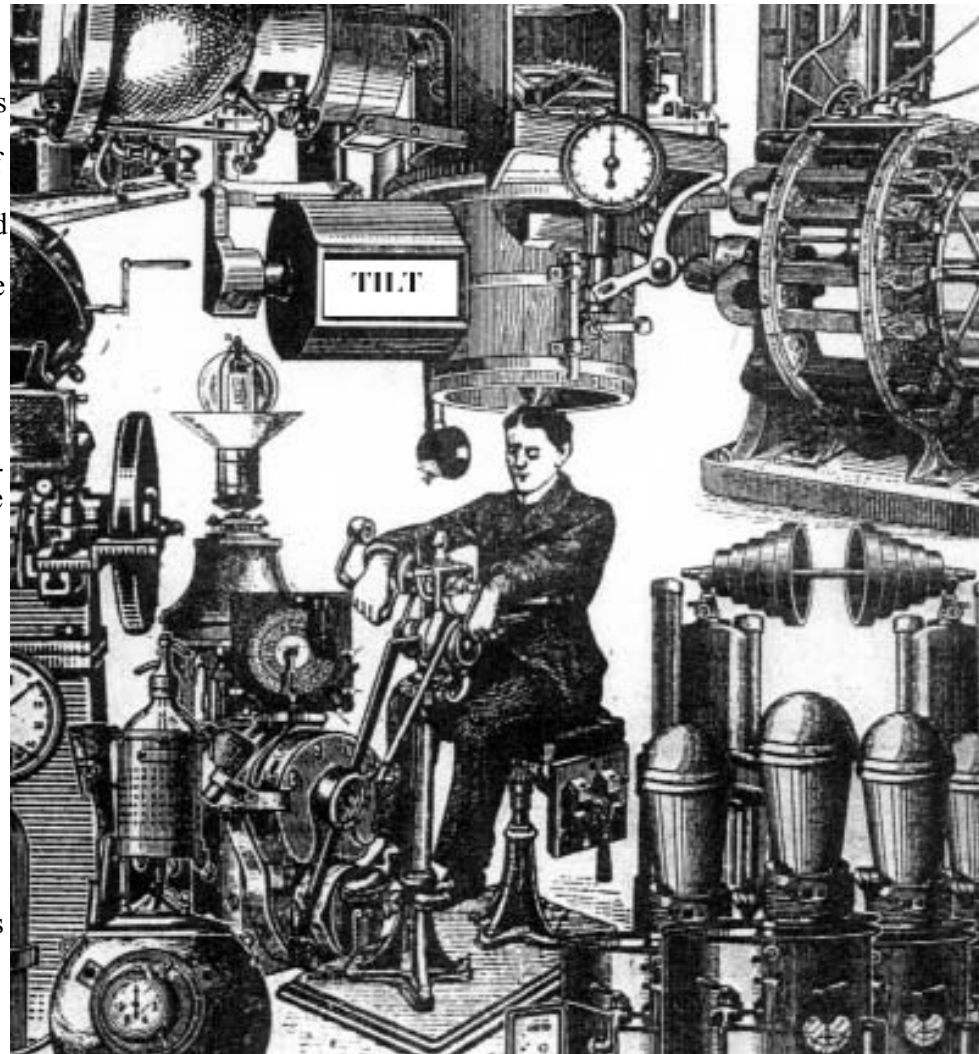
" At that time (1522) Münzer was still above all a theologian; his attacks were almost exclusively directed against priests. (...) Münzer, whose ideas, expressed more and more clearly, became more daring every day, then resolutely separated from the bourgeois Reformation and henceforth directly played the role of a political agitator. Faith is nothing other than the embodiment of reason in man. Thanks to this faith, to reason that has come to life, man becomes divine and sanctifies himself. This is why the sky is not something beyond, it is in our very life that we must seek it; and the task of believers is precisely to establish this heaven, the kingdom of God, on earth. Likewise, there is no such thing as hell or perpetual damnation. His sermons took on an even more violently revolutionary character. No longer limiting himself to attacking priests, he thundered with the same ardor against princes, nobility, and patriarchy. He portrayed existing oppression in the most ardent colors and contrasted it with the imaginary picture of the millennial kingdom of social and republican equality. "

Already in the year 1381, the Englishman John Bail had, therefore, already explained in his heretical chronicles, the economic reasons justifying the revolt. By observing this struggle closely, Marx and Engels understood that the priests only interpret the world to better enslave it while the new philosophers must transform it in this way, they extended the class struggle to the whole history of society. . The sacred continued its way, this time, in the glorification of the working masses.

The German harangue Muenzer, like the echo in the mountains, spread campaigns in villages, through centuries and countries and finally found ear to the Levellers, where as part of the English Revolution of the XVIIIth century, were the first to explicitly identify the social revolution and the millennium. All these peasants adopted and took an oath to obey, like Jesus, the cult of “voluntary poverty” as professed by the English protest theologian John Wycliffe of Oxford University, an enemy of the offensive luxury of the Church, an idea taken up by the hippies elsewhere. Marked by the desire for a return to a spiritual ideal, the peasants want to imitate the Christ of the Gospels and live in direct union with God without the intermediary of the corrupt church. To do this, they transformed the teaching of Christ into daily evangelical action. The leitmotif of all this popular turmoil is at the heart of the Gospels :

“It is not those who listen to the Law who are righteous before God, but those who put it into practice who will be justified. When the pagans who do not have the Law naturally do what the Law prescribes (...) they show that the work of the Law is written in their hearts. “(Rom 2 : 13-15)

Marx, during his stay in England, studied the great theorists of English free thought including Toland who wanted a return to primitive Christianity without dogmas and Hobbes who renounced the authority of the church in favor of civil power. Hobbes took advantage of this metaphysical divide to establish a radical challenge to politics by breaking with the ancient tradition in which the community prevailed over the individual. The rise of individualism to the detriment of community solidarities led Hobbes to think of a political system based on the domination of a strong power capable of unifying through fear and which is based on a contract of submission of each citizen: absolutism . Since “man is a



wolf for man” and that the search for profit through domination can only lead to violence, war, insecurity, Hobbes deduces that only the strongest power allows to provide the necessary security for the individual.

Inspired by the monstrous Leviathan in the *book of Job* in *the Old Testament* , Hobbes drew the motto “nothing on earth can compare in strength to him” and applied it to the state. Vested with this absolute power, the State is able to

impose peace on individuals by force, it is the sole guarantor of life, of order because it prevents resistance from individuals: The State is “the civil war perpetually prohibited by the weight of power. This subjugation of the people operates through fear, the fear which cements social cohesion. The sovereign State absorbed the church and thus acquired all the material means of administration and spiritual exercise of power: God is the State depositary of the right of power over the material control of the world.

Marx and Engels, having well understood both the state absolutism of Hobbes and the revolutionary scope of the millenarian social discourse of the peasants based on the Parables of Christ, took inspiration from them to develop the concepts of the proletarian revolution. Jesus, yes! The Church and its oppressive religion, no! Hence, “religion, the opium of the people. “

Not many people know the true story of this quote. Besides, most of you will surely be surprised to learn that there is nothing precisely Marxist in the political sense. When Marx establishes his critique of religion, his political thesis is in the making. This idea of narcogenic religion, we find it in several other writers of the time and

does not have at all the meaning which one wanted to give it. Compare this text by Ludwid Heine from 1839 to that of Marx in 1844:

“Blessed be a religion which has poured into the bitter chalice of suffering humanity a few sweet and narcotic drops, spiritual opium, a few drops of love, hope and faith! “(Heine)

And now Karl Marx:

“Religious distress is, on the one hand, the expression of real distress and, on the other, protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the soul in a heartless world as it is the spirit of social conditions from which the spirit is excluded. It is the opium of the century. “

As you will notice this comparison highlights the contradictory character of religion, sometimes justifying the existing world by its institutions of power, sometimes protesting against this same unjust world by the teaching of Jesus. Of course, Marx will lean towards social protest. In this sense, the young Marx did not deny Jesus as a prophetic philosopher, he denied the Church; he thus imitated the critical position of Epicurus towards religion and Prometheus towards the gods. Subsequently, Marx came to consider religion as one of the different forms of ideology in the same way as law, morality and political thought.

This intellectual journey, Marx owes it to the criticism of Engels, who based his analysis on the study of primitive Christianity and heretical sects. For him, Christianity is first of all a religion of slaves, then it becomes the religious ideology of the Roman Empire then the religion of royalty, feudal exploitation and inquisitorial oppression and finally religion, adapted to the bourgeoisie and capitalism. All this analysis holds together except that Engels' mistake was to place the burden of his study on Christianity when what he describes applies rather to the ecclesiastical institution of priests, bishops and popes who betrayed Jesus. for centuries already, since they tasted the temporal joys of Roman power under Constantine.

On the other hand, what Engels analyzed in detail is indeed the corollary between primitive Christianity and contemporary socialism. The two great movements are mass movements made up of the exploited, small people crumbling under debts, peasants and impoverished workers, movements of the oppressed subjected to persecution by the authorities in place and above all, both promise a soon deliverance from bondage and misery. Socialism like Christianity proposed itself as a liberation movement. The difference is that Christians await their deliverance in the Hereafter, while Socialists await it on earth like the Christian heretics of Münzer.

But above all, a perverse effect of history, Engels raised the socialist revolution to such a level of hope that it can only be compared to millennial expectations. The spiritual foundation underlying atheistic socialism is millennial and Christian in inspiration.

But Engels where he could draw this bright idea if not in the writings of Joachim of Flora grouped in *the Apocalypse exhibition* which dates back to the XIIIth century. According to him, the millennium is the “third age” which will be that of the Spirit who will succeed the age of the Father (*Old Testament*), the age of the Son. (*New Testament*) We are just beginning to understand the exceptional role of Joachim de Flore's “prophecies” in the birth, structure, in short, the genesis of all modern millenarian and / or revolutionary movements including communism pending of the return of the “golden age. “

The third epoch of history, according to Joachim, is that of freedom through knowledge placed under the sign of the Holy Spirit. It called into question the whole theology of the Catholic Church because the reign of freedom implies the historical overcoming of Christianity and Judaism and the abolition of their rites and institutions for the benefit of the universal regeneration brought about by knowledge. The revelation of God is no longer an element isolated in time and reserved for a chosen people, no! Revelation from God is perpetual, continual, progressive, and keeps pace with our knowledge. The third age is that of the achievement of universal freedom marked by the triumph of reason and education. In short, if there is a temple, it is the school.

Thanks to Engels' analysis, Marx understood well the emancipatory role of Jesus the Savior, whose sufferings are called to change the world. Pragmatic, his big question was : is the idea of Christ useful to the proletarian revolution? And not : is this idea true or false? Marx simply transferred the liberating power of Christ to the suffering proletariat. It only remained for him to write the Gospel of the class struggle, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* ; for the great revolutionary movements have always needed a founding text as the mystical basis necessary for their achievements.

“Indeed, Marx's classless society and the consequent disappearance of historical tensions find their exact precedent in the myth of the Golden Age which, according to multiple traditions, characterizes the beginning and the end of history. Marx enriched this venerable myth with a whole Judeo-Christian messianic ideology: on the one hand, the prophetic role and the soteriological function that he grants to the proletariat; on the other hand, the final struggle between Good and Evil, which can easily be compared to the apocalyptic conflict between Christ and Antichrist, followed by the victory of the former. »(Eliade, 1963, p.225) (soteriology : doctrine of the salvation of humanity which implies the coming of a savior)

For Engels and Marx, it is obvious that early Christianity is at the origin of modern socialism. It is from this atmosphere of religiosity focused on salvation that he understands that he must present his philosophical and economic theory “as a complete system of explanation, of interpretation of the world, with a global vision of the meaning of history and its movement which gave man a meaning to his life. “(Ellul)

The question of the God of the Jews or of the Christians and his analysis left Marx indifferent; what counted was the role played by religion in social processes and above all in denouncing the exploitation of the working class by the Church. His position is clearly expressed in the *German Gazette in Brussels* of September 12, 1847 :

* “The social principles of Christianity justified ancient slavery, glorified medieval serfdom, they are ready, if need be, to also defend the oppression of the proletariat - they will be free to play self-pity.

* The social principles of Christianity preach the need for a ruling class and a class of the oppressed and limit themselves to making the pious wish that the first be charitable towards the second.

* The social principles of Christianity place in heaven the consistorial compensation for all infamies and thereby justify their maintenance on earth.

* The social principles express all the baseness of which the oppressed are victims from the oppressors either as just punishment for original sin and other faults, or, as trials imposed on the elect by the Lord in his infinite wisdom .

* The social principles of Christianity preach cowardice, self-contempt, degradation, servility, humility, in short, all the properties of the rabble; the proletariat, which does not want to be treated like the scoundrel, needs its courage, its dignity, its pride and its sense of independence much more than bread.

* The social principles of Christianity are servile and devious and the proletariat is revolutionary. “

In short, the *New Testament* has a revolutionary potential disguised by “the social principles of Christianity” preached by the Church. This position of Marx gave birth to various left millennial movements associated with utopian socialism and Christian Marxism.

The heretics of the Middle Ages came to the same conclusions as Marx and asked themselves exactly the same question that the great contemporary philosopher and theologian Jacques Ellul expressed, even recently, in these terms in his book *The Subversion of Christianity* :

“How is it that the development of Christian society and of the Church has given birth to a society, to a civilization, to a culture that is quite the opposite of what we read in the *Bible* , of what is indisputable in both of the *Torah* , of the prophets, of Jesus, of Paul? I mean in everything. It was not on one point that there was a contradiction, but on all points. “(P.9)

The Catholic Church has failed. To acquire the considerable power of religion, the nascent revolution had to eliminate ideological competition and offer atheistic Marxism-Leninism as a revolutionary alternative to religion. The proletariat is then entrusted with the soteriological and historical mission of saving the human race.

“The Marxist myth of a golden age, brought about by the definitive triumph of the proletariat, constitutes the most articulate and brilliant expression of all modern political eschatologies. According to Marx, the classless society of the future will put an end to all the conflicts and all the tensions that have characterized the history of mankind since its inception. Strictly speaking, there will be no more history, there will be a sort of earthly paradise, because man will finally be free and will have enough to eat, with the minimum of work, since the machines invented by scientists will take care of themselves. rest. (Eliade Mircea, *Méhistophélès et l’androgynie*, p.226-227)

From now on, the Gospel is red (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*) and communism is transformed into a substitute atheistic religion. Lenin himself

wrote expressly, according to Ellul, that “the constitution of the Communist Party was built on the model of the Jesuit Order and in the image of the Order of the Knights of Porte-Glaives. “

None other than the great Catholic theologian Gustav A. Wetter, former rector of the Pontifical Russian College and one of the best connoisseurs of communist ideology, has been able to highlight, with rigor in his book *Historical and Dialectical Materialism* , the striking formal similarities between the Roman Catholic system and the Soviet communist system. Note that the following parallel is applicable to all Islamic, Jewish religious institutions, sects and messianic movements such as Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Born again Christian, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Raelian etc.

“Like Roman Catholicism, Soviet Communism (Chinese, North Korean, etc.) presupposes a world” stuck in evil “, which needs” redemption. “ The “revelation”, which occurred at the “plenitude of time” or at the apogee of dialectical development, is deposited, also in communism, in four canonical texts (The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels, *The State and Lenin’s Revolution* , Mao’s *Red Book*) and their respective epigons. This revelation is preserved, protected and explained by the infallible Magisterium of the Party (the Church), by the Holy Office of the Political Bureau (the Vatican) and by the infallible First Secretary (the Pope) in person. The task of philosophers (priests and theologians) is not to enrich, multiply and criticize this doctrinal deposit, but only to teach people to use it in all areas of life, and to ensure keep the doctrine “pure” by exposing heresies and deviationists. The Party’s infallible magisterium openly condemns heresy. When he has spoken, the deviationist heretic has only to submit, to make his self-criticism and to recant his heresy. (Inquisition) If he fails in his duty, he is “excommunicated” and excluded. (like Salmon Rusdhe and his Satanic Verses for Muslims or the theologian Eugène Drewermann for Catholics) Thus the Party appears as “the pillar and the fortress of truth” as the bulwark of orthodoxy. While being on the defensive, this orthodox communism practices the missionary offensive: a doctrine which alone conforms to the truth and carries salvation, it necessarily and by nature aspires to spread by all means throughout the world, sending its missionaries everywhere since its propaganda center. Outside, no salvation! (gulag hell) It requires rigorous organization, blind obedience, party discipline. And the whole is placed under the orders of the Grand Chief, who is almost revered as in a cult with demonstrations of submission, large gatherings, parades and pilgrimages to his tomb ... ”(quoted in Küng, *God exists he?*) (the words in parentheses are ours)

Since Marxism is inspired by Christian messianism, it is quite logical that communism promises the promised land. But this idyllic place is inspired by the *City of God* of Saint-Augustin, atheist version. For Saint-Augustine, the State cannot exist apart from God and his laws because in order to endure eternally the State needs divine power. This is why the authority of the church must be absolute. The Catholic Church is therefore by delegation master of men. Anyone who denies this authority must be demonized and destroyed.

From Saint-Augustine, Lenin understood that the only possible equality of men is through equality before submission. The master of the Kremlin also arrogated

to himself the divine right of life and death over his subjects. As soon as the Revolution was over, Lenin, the great Bolshevik god of the sanctified state, imitating biblical precepts, condemned the enemies of the New World Order to the prohibition. The peasant owners were dispossessed of their land and eliminated, the Orthodox priests, the popes hunted down, the Tsarist soldiers shot and the recalcitrant proletarians sent to “re-education” camps. The Soviet Union experienced its Inquisition and its great Terror. Stalin, the “whipper father”, deported entire peoples, Cossacks, Abkhazians, Armenians, Tatars, Oubykhs, Kalmyks, Karachay, Meshkists and Chechens. Two million were deported to Siberia. Red Square reflected the color of the blood spilled by some 20 million victims of the Kremlin ogre.

Not only is Communist China an atheist, it paradoxically represents the most religious monotheistic country in the world. His only God, Mao Tse-Tung, the Father of the nation called, “the red sun that never sets” suggesting his immortality. Mao wrote the *Communist Action Bible : the Little Red Book* revered like the *Koran* or the *Torah* . All the religions which cast doubt on the Grand Helmsman were severely controlled and many temples and monasteries were closed, especially in Tibet, not to mention the millions of victims of the so-called “ cultural “ revolution led in China by the regime.

It is always religious dogmatism, whether deist or atheist or state, which reinforces the great despots in “their right” when they massacre human beings or when they arbitrarily deprive them of their freedom. No civilization has been able to resist the pathology of hatred.

Pathological messianism.

The rise of the far right in the West is mainly linked to the rise of the European workers’ movements known as “the revolutionary left.” According to historian Eric Hobsbawm, Lenin fathered Mussolini and Hitler. The victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia signaled the awakening of the Right. The middle classes and the petty bourgeoisie were the backbone. The economic crisis of 1929 and its lot of unemployed and disinherited confronted parliamentary democracy and economic liberalism with an increasingly revolutionary working class while the bourgeoisie asked the government to fall back on force and constraint, which Mussolini did. .

The main spokespersons for Futurism have become fascists. These artists joined an entire generation of individuals who believed they recognized in fascism such a revolutionary movement as communism; a third possible path between capitalism and Marxism by giving hope for a takeover of production by the workers themselves in a market economy.



Now that Freud had demonstrated the existence of dark forces (libido) and hidden instincts (Eros and Thanatos, impulses of life and death), Mussolini, the first understood that fascism had to drape poetry, myths to succeed. It is by going to draw among the infinite resources of theosophical currents that Mussolini resuscitated the virtues of the Dionysian man at the same time winner, destroyer and creator. Inspired by the immolating vertigo of the Aztecs, he sacrificed the best elements of the Italian youth on the fascist altars.

It is of course Marinetti, father of Italian futurism who achieved the synthesis between poetry and slogan for the purpose of self-promotion of their artistic project. A revolutionary new typography was set up “characterized by alert, free and expressive lettering and by a new conception of space in the graphic composition which would completely overturn traditional notions of harmony, elegance and symmetry. »(Marinetti cited by Salaris in *Art et Publicité*, p.185-186)

Advertising and slogan associated with the success of Italian futurist artists in mass communication; all was in place for the political recovery of advertising techniques by the European fascist movements. The tandem of Art and Propaganda still holds water and will reach new heights. Mussolini first understood the importance of propaganda in the 1920s ; thus he had created the *Minculpop* (Ministry of Popular Culture) which functioned as a propaganda tool from 1925 .

The table is set. All the great creators of the European avant-garde adopted more and more a radical political position calling for the destruction of the old world, supported by youth movements like Dadaism.

“The public needs to be raped in rare positions. “(Picabia)

One evening, like this evening, February 5, 1916, at the *Café Voltaire* in Zurich, a group of young people turned on a radical staging of human negativity. They proclaimed themselves DADA - laughing in the room -, DADA being a very popular shampoo brand at the time.

“DADA SHAMPOOING”, on sale, at the beginning of the last century, at the Bergmann & Co pharmacy, at 51 Bahnhofstrasse, Zurich, a stone’s throw from the Café Voltaire. “(Marcus, *Lipsticktraces*, p. 241)

Dada advocated self-exclusion from a useless society. To do this, nothing better than to cause scandal. The Dadaists, imitating the natives, dressed themselves in grotesque masks, hung shells from their ears, wore hideous masks, declaiming absurd poems and shouting insults to the bourgeoisie; everything to excite the nerves and provoke brawls. The police intervention was synonymous with a successful evening, the crowning of which spread to the headlines the next day.

The swagger was so successful that the writers began to seriously believe it, so much the public appreciated the art of anti-art.

“Art needs an operation”. (Tzara)

“I am against all systems, the most acceptable system is having none.” (Tzara). Dada means nothing, a radical expression of nihilism that Nietzsche revealed to us as “evil of the century”. Dada is the manifestation and the scandal without wanting to mean anything, Dada is the absurdity. Dada tends towards the absolute end of the world but also plays on the liquidation of past history: “I don’t even want to know if there were men before me.”

Even before the First World War, it was obvious that the Enlightenment would succeed that of darkness. Very few people then understood - and there are many today - that Dadaism is not art but its opposite: it is the negation of art or rather “art. of the destruction of art”. Dada thus casts a mortal gaze like Rimbaud before, on the “art” and “civilization” system. Art reflects the same ideology that leads to war and destruction; the only art that really holds up is “the art of war.” Dada is extremist expressionism. Nourished by reading the great insurgents of history: Sade, Nietzsche, Lautréamont, Rimbaud, the spirit of subversion also developed a taste for black and blasphemous humor, for the grotesque; the figure of Ubu, created by Alfred Jarry, became for many emblematic.

“For Dada, it is a question of getting rid of all the political, social, cultural and artistic traditions of the West which, according to them, ended in the war of 1914-1918. It’s about denying everything, Dada is against the past but he also denies the future. Dada will also make fun of any human activity and the feelings that engender it, the machine (Picabia), society (Grosz), art (Schwitters)”. (Serge Lemoyne, *The avant-gardes, Dada*, p.80)

And the poet Aragon wrote in 1920, during his Dada period:

“More paintings, more sculptures, more writers, more religions, more republics, more royalism, more imperialism, more socialism, more politics, more protectors, more aristocrats, more ‘money, no more police, no more fatherland, enough of this imbecility, nothing, nothing, nothing ... “

Dada is marked with the seal of despair is black bile poetry, exactly what Nietzsche had predicted: nihilism is the drama of the XXth century, one of the last man, Dada confirmed. The artist Dada wants to desecrate religion and the state and even abolish art and culture as proof of the all-powerful magnificence of the artist who can even destroy himself. As Christian heretics of the XIIth century who wanted to hasten the end of the world by spreading chaos to be released soon, Dada, he will attack to destroy the very foundation of the human species: language. Destroy both the scholarly language and the poetry that allowed and justified such a warlike madness and shatter culture. The death of God must succeed the death of man. Totalitarian drifts towards which several other avant-garde artists headed.

Nietzsche and Dada were the true visionaries of the twentieth century. If the success of the ideologies of hatred and of the “every man for himself” has

grown to the point of delirium tremens, it is not by chance: the absurdity of the “superman” is starting to become a political problem.

“What about the Superman really? (...) The one who despises the populace and is counted among the physical and intellectual elite, among the distinguished people, the aristocrats, the privileged? Merciless towards himself, does he not seek to root out what represents the golden mean, and to cultivate harshness and cruelty? Like a beast of prey whose motto would be “Live dangerously”, does it not pursue its own interest, without regard to the victims, having for sole aim to increase its power, which is useful for life, which is profitable to domination? (...) This type of man is only too well known, whose “interpersonal relationships are rarefied even in their private life, determined by functional and utilitarian values, governed by interests of power: everywhere the weak are the weak. victim of the stronger, of the superior man, of the less scrupulous man. The horizon of meaning has effectively disappeared, as have the ultimate values, the obligatory norms, the acceptable models, the absolute truth. In reality, is it not a nihilism of values which now determines human behavior? What Nietzsche, more lucid than many others, had foreseen, did not it happen? (Küng, 1981)

“Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer”

(Hitler’s slogan justifying the invasion of Austria in 1939)

The Wandervogel

German expressionism as an artistic current is contemporary with a large-scale social movement : the jungendbewegung. In 1896, Hermann Hoffmann founded a student association linked to the Lycée de Steglitz and began in 1898 his first high school hikes on the banks of the Rhine and four-week excursions in the forests of Bohemia. These two expeditions constitute a revolution in the educational system of Germany. Hoffmann wanted to put young people in contact with nature and the great romantic and idealistic ideals professed by the great minds of the time, among them Rainer Maria Rilke, Nietzsche, Rimbaud, Hölderlin, Langbehn and above all, the poet Hermann Hesse, future (1946) Nobel Prize for Literature, who through his writings brings formative vagrancy back into the fashion of the day. A simple idea germinates: to take life and reality head on, young people cannot remain trapped in the smoky cities of the industrial era: they must get out of this cangue and go on a hike (magic word in German: wandern). This unconventional pedagogy, these excursions become the symbols of a general revolt against the established order (school, industry, administration, etc.). It preaches internal rather than materialist prosperity, a reform of institutions without violent revolution.

The idealized romanticism was expressed in the movements of young German libertarians extolling the pantheist cult, the solstice festivals, the romanticism of the mountains, of the high summits , the resurrection of the fabulous Nordic past of Hölderlin and other German romantics, of naturalistic mystical poems and other powerful founding myths of the human soul sublimated by Wagner’s music. Essentially centered on dreams, myths, on the mystical vision of the Absolute and mainly on the pack instinct of a deified collectivity, of a racist sect, of a “chosen people”, Nazism is of tribal origin. The supremacy of youth

was to renew with pure idealism all the spirituality of a people.

In love with the great Viking sagas, German youth drew inspiration from the heroic stories of these “glorious Aryans” from the North to develop a romanticism imbued with obscure passions advocating an all-out liberation of family, school and social life. The Young consider the wild Nordic hordes to be their “Blood”. This blood is their intimate truth, felt by natural intuition, without Revelation or book, without the authority of Fathers and Priests. Remembering the revolutionary enthusiasms of 1848, the young German Karl Fischer 19, more aware of this revolt than Hoffmann, took over from his elder brother and founded the first youth movement (jungendbewegung) called the wandervögel: the “migratory birds”. We are in 1901, the “migratory birds” refuse the traditional bourgeois way of life of the old century. “Migrating birds”, the name suggests, want to stand on their own feet and get out of their cages. The authoritarian character of Western society, the severe discipline of schools where recalcitrant students were literally beaten and tortured, the stifling atmosphere of conventions and general conformism led young people to a laudable, albeit idealistic and somewhat anarchic attitude of protest. .

Such a movement could not have existed and especially be so successful without a high level prophet. Like Jesus and his disciples, Karl Fischer (we call him Führer and we greet him with a “Heil”) took his comrades on long walks where we discovered the unsuspected joys of forbidden wanderings (truant) during of which one admired the ruins of the past as visible signs of a bygone era. We discussed the great problems of the day, we talked about aspirations for freedom and we sang revolutionary hymns and cheerful and saucy popular songs. “For the first time in the history of the world, youth is forming a social group and this movement is independent of social classes, it is rather an age class.” (Giesecke)

Fischer begins to dream of a Jugendreich, of a reign of youth, freed from the tutelage of adults and develops a fundamental critique of the established order, in the name of an ethics of austerity (anti-consumerist). Fischer establishes a more military discipline and organizes more adventurous excursions. Only the collective, the community, are capable of creating a better world and a new type of man. This cult of youth will create a new political order, the “New Order” (La Rochelle), will invent a true “German Science” (Heidegger)

The wandervogel is part of a movement of general revolt against the social and aesthetic effects of the industrialization of Europe. This protest is inspired by the romantic current (Hölderlin) and “naturphilosophy” Wearing extravagant hats and clothes painted with esoteric numbers and slogan (Wild Frei - free and wild), these young Dadaists before their time first a-politicians quickly understand that only a youth movement, whose members are constantly renewed from generation to generation - perpetual novelty - will be able to achieve the long-desired permanent revolution, the only guarantee of freedom.

It is during hikes in the forests and through the interspersing of songs contemptuous of bourgeois society and stories exalting natural anarchy, the “disturbances of the senses” and the saving coming of the “superman” that the refusal

is expressed. of this exasperated and furious youth against the culture of “old people” and parents. These first outcasts of the dawning century propagated such an energy that suddenly it was all the youth who rediscovered the values of virile camaraderie, of returning to nature towards primitive freedom, each doing what he pleased where and when. pleased him. Ulcerated against the religion of their father and the hypocrisy of all previous generations, the “migratory birds” want to fight the bourgeois Holy Trinity : school, family, church. They thus join the revolt of the philosophers (Nietzsche, Bergson) and the poets, (Hölderlin, Rimbaud,) and want to reconnect with the medieval tradition of the Vagantes, “peregrinating schoolboys”.

The typically German movement grew rapidly until its peak in 1913 when thousands, we speak of twenty-five thousand adherents, gathered for a week near the town of Kassel. This first mass gathering, ancestor of our pop festivals, allowed young people of all social classes to study, through various committees, political and moral problems in a clearly pacifist and secular orientation. This gathering is cited as the forerunner of global ecological thinking. Of course, we think of Porto Alegre, the alterglobalists and the world days of Catholic youth.

The fame of the movement as a benefactor rumor soared like a flock of wild geese beyond borders. Listening ears caught her. All over Europe, young people began to wiggle, to kick.

Adolphe Hitler, a failed German artist, understood all the revolutionary energy that slumbered like a sleeping volcano in the hearts of young Germans. Imitating Mussolini, it was about putting these hopes and framing these energies by putting them at the service of the Nazi ideology. Hitler did not invent anything. The hatred of the Enlightenment, of Reason and of Science, the exaltation of heroism, sacrifice, backwardness, patriotism, the unity of the “Volk”, this people that one meets in the dreamy vagrancy : all this is contained in romantic poetry at the end of the XVIIIth century. To the hedonistic values of the romantics, Hitler added a propaganda badge, a swastika, and hastened to found “the Hitler Youth.” “

According to Polish artist and philosopher Tadeusz Kantor, the Café / cabaret Voltaire, the birthplace of the dada movement, was “the infernal hall of the Apocalyptic Brothel. The dada slogan : “This world is rotten, we must sack it” was the prelude to Death, War, Destruction preached by the Nazi revolt.

The Führer is the SUPREME DADA; he had a hatred for Jews comparable to Dada’s for society. Hitler / Tzara, same fight: destroy, eliminate the thing hated, sink into Evil knowingly.

The feeling of a new and better generation will lead to a sect of young wild beasts replacing the sentimental cowardice of adults. Thus was formed a special elite, the “band of the leader” whose political rise represents the real life force of the revolutionary dictatorship focused on the search for power. It alone matters and to maintain it, the unscrupulous violence of humanity becomes a spiritual value so that the brutal exercise of power is the only duty of the elite where all members become complicit in abuses like any other. criminal gang.

Georgette Mouton in *Jeunesse et Genèse du Nazisme* even declares that “Nazism is a phenomenon of generalized and recovered juvenile delinquency. “Thus” the new man “was both martyred in his body and morally drained capable of” doing evil for evil. “ “

The mystique of War and Death, of the Sacrifice to the Fatherland, this irrational, spiritualistic ideal, in practice underlies the desire for murder associated with the mystical taste for the drama of Calvary for messianic ends, to speak like Freud . Terror transformed into a theological weapon borders on radical atheism. Thus the “terrorism of religion” culminates in the “religion of terrorism. The policy of the “clean slate”, complete destruction of old structures to better rebuild and ensure the Victory of the New, such is the program of the Youth Party. The next generation would always be more valuable than the previous generation. According to Hitler, the permanent revolution involves the perpetual renewal of society thanks to the vital impetus of young people from generation to generation. The regeneration of the world is on the move.

Across Europe a huge cohort of citizens frustrated in their desire for heroic feats only asked to serve a noble cause. Mussolini recruited among the soldiers, the students, the young workers and unemployed, the members of the fascist brigades. The *shirts black* fascist Mussolini’s *Shirts brown* Nazi Hitler, the *Phalange* Spanish General Franco, the *Arrow Cross* in Hungary, the *Iron Guard* in Romania showered their wish unfulfilled. All these ultra nationalist movements prophesied on the ruins of the First War the mythical advent of a decisive victory over the forces of evil and disorder. Because the fascist elite requires noble qualities present in all classes of society. It is the mental predispositions, strengths of character and leadership that take precedence over basely socio-economic considerations. Anyone who feels capable of governing society can be part of this elite under the law of natural selection. Social Darwinism will become an essential component of Italian fascism and German Nazism. The struggle of the races was, in Germany and in Italy, preferred to the class struggle.

In another place, a man named Mao engaged the Communist youth in the Red Army in the traumatic “Cultural Revolution.” The ideology of diversion, characteristic of both the arts and the politics of the twentieth century, slowly emerges . Modern dictators hastened to proclaim themselves the new gods of this technical world in construction by driving artists out of their desired Eden. It is characteristic to note that all messianic movements are based on a purification of society. Hitlerism, Stalinism and Maoism are no exception to the rule in their mission to erase all the social faults of the past and generate a new man.



As with religions, the believer in these “secular theologies” feels free from ancient fears and grants the leader divine powers.

All societies, whether communist, socialist or democratic, are crossed by mechanistic ideology, a true state religion. Struck by technological idolatry, the nations all dream of their Redemption, of their liberation by industrial machines and their production rate increased tenfold. Believing that technology has the power to solve all social problems is still the political credo of many societies today.



Thus the new man could identify with the all-powerful God-State (capitalist or communist) for the conquest of the world and with the nation by using primitive tribal hatred as a factor of social cohesion between the classes. The theological terror of the Third Reich meant that the warrior’s violence merged with the prophet’s mystical ambition. The *Brown Shirts* , the *SS* and the *Kapos* , a motley mix of lowland thugs with the educated elite, were the performers of the ultimate immolation enthroning sacrificial destruction as a bloodthirsty universal order.

“The army and religion alone have the possibility of satisfying the most consequent aspirations of men. The first professes to really face death, the other

knows the language marked with anguish and stormy majesty which befits those who are on the threshold of the grave. »(Georges Bataille, Complete Works II, p.246)

War is the engine of the new order, while sacrifice acts as a founding act. Canon and Faith merge in a complementary capacity to destroy. The Nietzschean will to power mutates into a will to end it. From this apocalyptic radicalism emerges the hell that Forster (1793) had predicted more than a century before, its name is totalitarianism.

Totalitarianism is a synthesis of all the myths through a “fundamentalist” ideology aimed at a “utopian reconstruction of society from a global plan” which will bring salvation to humanity, to mankind. Totalitarianism is to politics what monotheism is to religion. Instrumental reason is a partner in this chimerical project of unity embodied in the single party.

“The autonomous character of art was severely tested by the new revolutionary dictatorships looming on the horizon. Because the totalitarian tactic requires putting all kinds of activities under its boot. No area outside of politics, howev-

er insignificant it may be - stamp collecting club, choir, astronomy club, etc. - can escape its system of domination. All these disparate leagues, clubs and associations were brought under control and used to assert the power of the ruling elite, and art was no exception. Each individual must meet, at each of his steps including in his leisure time, the totalitarian Party which must integrate within it all that is creative to better control it if not destroy it. “

“A style that can be described as ‘Hitlerite’ was imposed on art, as well as on all aspects of life. This is first of all marked by a sort of centralization of cultural life, in particular at the level of the artistic media then employed. (painting, sculpture, cinema, music, architecture and literature) The idea, at the start, consisted in bringing together in the hands of a single organization or ministry all of these media allowing the practice of culture. This did not mean, however, that the regime had complete control over artistic production, but it could at the very least hold the portfolio of grants and gradually close the door to all attempts by the arts deemed “avant-garde” to penetrate, on a scale. mass, social life. Through the *Ministry of the People’s Information and Propaganda* (say *Ministry of Propaganda*), the regime could exercise greater control over the artistic production while spreading the Führer’s orders about the arts for example. It is about legitimizing a “cultural dictatorship” by submitting Art to the State. “

“Once the regime has given itself the instruments of control, we must then define what we actually want to control. This is a stage where authorization becomes the fundamental concept of the perception that the regime has of the artistic works produced. The authorization aspect relates more specifically to the whole development of criteria, mainly ideological, which allow the regime to say that a work is or does not conform to the views of the party representing the German people. A bad or even “degenerate” work can be rejected by the regime and its targeted author banned from production. It is a period when artistic production is filtered, it is then that a kind of *Kulturkampf* takes place. (*Fight for Culture* , the “good”) In other words, the gradual establishment of absolute control, or even “totality” over the nature of cultural life in Germany. “(Carl Pépin, <http://www.guerre-mondiale.org/Articles/artnazi1.htm>)

The return to order in art heralded a nationalism based on traditions and classicism. In architecture, monumental art spread as much in totalitarian regimes as in democracies. The essence of constructive thought materialized in the architecture of the international style, a unity of art and technique, called for a radical purification supporting an order based on calculation and measure which reflected the scientific ideal of the time. . Any structure, as well as society in general, must achieve its highest degree of efficiency. The study of animal behavior and Social Darwinism introduced the vision of a disciplined human society like a beehive where each performs its function for the common good. Anything that is not essential should be eliminated.

The visions of Italian futurists and Russian constructivists, objects born from the machine and new architecture by the creation of new materials (concrete) will become the only reality worth exploring, in short, new technologies will replace the nature in the imagination of man. The man, the new demiurge, had

to project his physical strength and his mental energy into the construction of an entirely artificial environment.

We find this happiness of humanity in the mastery of nature by the sciences since the utopias of the Renaissance: in *Utopia* (1516) by Thomas More, in *New Atlantis* (c. 1600) by Francis Bacon, in *La City of the Sun* (1623) by the Italian Tommaso Campanella, in Descartes’ *Discourse on Method* (1637), in *Research on the Nature and the Cause of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) by Adams Smith, in *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1830) by Auguste Comte, in *l’Avenir de la science* (1890) by Rénan, in *Récits des temps futur* (1899) by Wells, in all the writings of Futurism, Constructivism, the Bauhaus towards the establishment of ideal cities .

Industrial expansion, the exploration of new markets, the exploitation of colonial resources, panacea to heal the wounds of the 14-18 war, sow the tragic euphoria of overproduction with the consequence of the stock market crash of 1929. Following the great destruction of the world war, the state takes advantage, as much in the East as in the West, to launch out in great programs of massive constructions; urban beautification must stick to ideology. The stake is twofold, ideologically, monumentality must symbolically characterize the political regime and secondly, functionality and standardization require the design of the most economical living areas in order to achieve as many of them as possible.

The State had to counter the threat which is rumbling and launched into major architectural works responding to the needs of contemporary life and to the creation of jobs necessary for the vitality of the economy. Large hotels, department stores, huge administrative and apartment buildings, towering stadiums and structured industrial complexes spring up like mushrooms after the rain. A whole “poetics” of the arrangement is set in motion : purification of volumes, geometric purity, conscious desire for self-discipline which calls for a great clearing of the accumulated ugliness denounced by the architect Van de Velde : “a gnawing ugliness, like a vice, the heart and the brain; an ugliness dirty like the mud of big cities which sticks to the flesh... ”

Adolf Loos was the first architect (1900) to put forward the idea of the “type object”, a concept whereby the function of objects or buildings takes precedence over ornament. Functional rigor implies the stripping down to the austerity of forms in clear opposition to the ornamental naturalism of Art Nouveau. Who says function, thinks efficiency, observation applied by futurist architects. In *Manifesto of Futurist Architecture* : “We must invent and rebuild ex novo our modern city as an immense and tumultuous workshop, active, mobile and everywhere dynamic, and the modern building as a gigantic machine”.

Wanting to combat the proliferation of natural forms and the proliferation of unnecessary ornamentation, a movement of purification, a desire for rigor are inserted in the relationships between man and his environment, the relationship between man and technical products. Quietly, the idea of aestheticism is subordinated to that of function. From cultural reaction to kitsch, we fall into functional rationalism in art, mainly in architecture and town planning. “Functional

is that which functions as a repetitive and determined mechanism for the purpose of harmonizing the elements of a system and directing them towards the same efficient goal.” Thus community life in the new city for a new man must integrate notions of biology, sociology, economics, technology and of course, statistics. Integrating and coordinating is the fundamental idea of functionalism.

The high esteem of Italian futurists, especially Depero, for the role of industry was reflected “in the global transformation of the urban landscape and of daily life, with the appearance of objects intended to improve the material conditions of existence. but also to spread a new aesthetic culture”. (Belli) The intoxication of technology, the nobility of speed, mechanical automation became the articles of law of the new aesthetic order.

This desire to build a new world attracted artists from all walks of life around schools or movements such as Vkhoutemas (Russia), Stijl (Holland), the new spirit (France) and of course the Bauhaus (Germany). Inspired by Russian constructivists, German architects grouped around Walter Gropius, in search of a new art of living, are also trying to revolutionize useful forms to renew the urban decor and above all respond to the lack of housing for workers. To do this, he proposed the mass production of prefabricated housing by standardized production. By founding the Bauhaus - Maison du Bâtir- Gropius wants to teach not an art, but a state of mind capable of evolving towards “the collective conception of great utopian projects” while taking into consideration the practical, economic and sociological needs of which the leitmotif would be : “integrate man into the modern world while mastering the design, construction and evolution of this same modern world”.

All these constructions reveal as much to the West as to the East, the use of an architectural language whose unique vocation is order in function. More and more, there is an urgent need to create a common stylistic language between painters, sculptors and architects. The magazines *De Stijl*, *Cercle et Carré*, *Concrete Art*, *Abstraction-Creation art*, *L'Esprit Nouveau* were the transmission belts of this “new laboratory of forms. Art is more and more related to scientific knowledge to the detriment of aestheticism considered retrograde. From these writings and debates emerged daring architects such as Gropius, Mies Van der Rohe (Bauhaus) and Jeanneret dit Le Corbusier whose functionalist geometry inspired by cubism associated with the purism of the Bauhaus would lead to the “international style” of the 1930s.

Functional rigor implies the stripping down to the austerity of forms in clear



opposition to the ornamental naturalism of Art Nouveau. The essence of constructive thought materialized in the architecture of the international style commands a radical purification supporting an order based on calculation and measure which reflects the scientific ideal of the time. It is the conquest of space through concrete and steel and the conquest of transparency through glass.



The ideology of technology speaks loud and clear and its rational discourse focused on the absolute complementarity between form and function, a dominant figure in constructivism, the international style and the Bauhaus, suggests the construction of a closed, static world, joyless, emotionless, centralized and controlled as totalitarian states imagine. The purification proposed by the revolutionary avant-garde architectures were quickly diverted by Stalin and Hitler for whom the purity of the proletariat for the one, the purity of the race for the other demanded monumental works to measure, rather expressing the excess of their demiurgic ambition.

As much in Germany as in the Soviet Union, avant-garde daring is tolerated if it gives way to the return of a certain classicism in a ceremonial style glorifying the power of totalitarian ideology. Hitler and Stalin embarked on grandiose projects whose monumentality symbolizes Authority. Hitler designed with the architect Speer the project of the “Grande Ax”, an immense avenue of five kilometers with a triumphal arch ending in the “Grande Halle”, a public square that can accommodate 180,000 people with a dome reminiscent of that of the US Capitol; this “eighth wonder of the world” to celebrate the dream of eternity of the German Reich. In Rome, it is the opening of the Via Dell’Impero through the ruins by gutting the historic city in order to impose the sumptuary mark of the new regime where the *Danteum* (unrealized mausoleum) was to constitute the synthesis between archeology and geometry futuristic with the help of refined materials such as marble (antiquity) and glass (modernity) materializing the eschatological idea of the “sublime. »Stalin was not to be outdone with his project for a « Palace of the Soviets », (not realized) a stepped tower of 450 meters reminiscent of the great Mesopotamian ziggurats, tower of Babel style, of gigantic size topped by a colossal statue of ‘a deified Lenin reigning over the world. The desired greatness is that of a Caesar, of an Alexander the Great founding a new empire. But above all the Palace of the Soviets, its tower rivaling the Empire State Building and Lenin’s monument with the Statue of Liberty, made it possible to claim an imperial grandeur comparable to its ideological enemy.

From this thought pattern are born utopian cities, Lang’s *Metropolis* style ,

which no longer fit into a natural environment at all but downright artificial like a pure artefact in the image of the man-god, Promethean. Inspired by the experiences of Russian constructivists, Western architecture also adheres to the utopian principle of a new city for a new man supported by a spirit of social solidarity and a common egalitarian morality. The glass skyscrapers reveal a mystique of transparency dispensing new light, capped by radio antennas delivering the messages of the new messianic gospel of urbanized man. (Edina Bernard, *Modern Art*, p.9-85)

But above all modern architectures and their “machine for living” and the new industrial designers projected, as a representation scheme, a homogenization of men and objects and a standardization of the modes of expression essential to the uniformity of mass thought. It should not be forgotten that the social Darwinism of the time began to praise the exemplary organization of social insects such as ants and bees, such is the model of functionalism with a “human face.” “

All totalitarianisms want to be the resurrections of an authentic power which destroys everything that is put through its extension. The will to power contaminates freedom with its desire for accomplishment because this aim for completion is the basis of the hope by which freedom sinks into radical evil as a work of totalization. More than essentially political, totalitarianism is the principle of terror, is the expression of radical Evil which tends towards the complete destruction of humanism by proposing an identity of degraded man; it is a policy of annihilation of the individual.

“The magic of the extreme” is “the tragedy of our time. “

Machiavellianism in politics, capitalism and socialism in economics, positivist scientism in the field of science, nationalism in the life of peoples, the absolute hold of technology over man, all this is the consequence of ‘utilitarianism. (Berdiaef)

“The marriage between totalitarian ideology and mechanized technology made it possible to formulate claims in favor of a total man, thus allowing an” authentic “sanctification of national life. (Robert A. Pois, *La religion de la nature et National Socialism*, p.207)

Totalitarianism is a religious tragedy of the spiritually collapsed man who wants to regain his integrity in the systematic organization of all the components of his life, even if it means losing his freedom. Except that freedom transformed into necessity marks the triumph of reason having lost all contact with the humanist experience because the radiant reason reached by vertigo is projected into the Absolute of the Absolutes. All these politicians of the last century understood the strength of the three axes on which the despotic power rests: the militarization of the single party, the “religious” subordination of individuals and the

sacralization of state policy and its leader as in the past. great ancient tyrannies.

The 1920s appeared as a period marked by the desire to build a stable peace. As a symbol of pacifism at its peak: the Briand-Kellogg pact (named after the American Secretary of State and the French Minister of Foreign Affairs), signed in Paris on August 27, 1928 by some sixty states, was a pact of “ general renunciation of war ”, the signatories of which undertook to resolve all conflicts“ in a peaceful manner ”.

The situation changed radically with the effects of the great crisis of 1929 and the rise of fascism. , the problems linked to the application of the treaties as well as the economic and social difficulties with which the governments were confronted quickly weakened them and encouraged the rise of political protests, coming from the communist revolutionary left, but also from new organizations which claimed an ideology new, fascism. In 1921, Benito Mussolini founded the National-Fascist Party; on October 29, 1922, he became the head of government and established a nationalist dictatorship, founded on a strong state and dominated by a single party.



The Weimar Republic, which ruled Germany after World War I, could not overcome the great depression following the economic crisis of 1929. In the face of popular discontent, the Communist Party and the National Socialist Party achieved many successes . In January 1933, Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi Party, was appointed chancellor by the President of the Republic Paul von Hindenburg. The Führer (“guide”) advocated a fascism whose essential specificity was its exacerbated racism. Faced with the humiliation of the diktat of Versailles, Hitler put forward the theory of Lebensraum, that is to say the fact of obtaining more living space for the German people; his belonging to a “superior” race, the Aryan race, giving, according to him, rights over other peoples. Political diversion from romantic idealism to the racial ideal in Germany, to the nationalist ideal in Japan, to the communist ideal of classless society in Russia. All three have ended in barbarism.

On the messianic person of the Führer rested all the propaganda of the Nazi ideology, “the only faith which leads our people to salvation. Here are the remarks made at the time by a prominent Party activist as recounted by Hermann Rauschning in *the nihilist revolution* :

“The person of the Führer must, more and more, withdraw into secrecy, into mystery. By surprising acts, by rare speeches, it will have to manifest itself only when the nation finds itself at a decisive moment in its destiny. The rest of the time, she will fade, like the creator behind the creation, in order to increase the mystery and the power of action. The very rarity of his appearances will make them great events. No great leader should wear out on the daily chores of government. I can even imagine, continued this old militant, that in a critical moment for the nation, the dead Führer would have a devastating action. A day might come when the Führer would have to be sacrificed to accomplish his

work. His own Party comrades, his followers, will then have to sacrifice him themselves. When Hitler has become a truly mythical figure, only then will the full depth of his magical power be revealed. “(P.87)

“Here the *Führer Mythos* had truly become ‘a cult of Hitler’ and Himmler himself often referred to him as a ‘Gottmensch. (God-man) (Robert A. Pois, *La religion de la nature et le national socialisme*, p.87)

Each time, that art, science, politics, democracy as much as communism, economics, capitalism as much as socialism, magnify themselves to the point of becoming a soteriological doctrine, i.e. a doctrine of salvation to the identical to the religions of which they claim to be or are subjected to cultural repercussions; every time I say, that this happens, then they adopt an extremist *motus vivendi* and inevitably they all drift quietly towards totalitarianism.

In January 1932, Japan conquered Shanghai and part of the coast, then, in the years that followed, extended its domination to all of northern China. In 1937, during a campaign of extreme violence, he sought to seize the rest of China, whose conquered regions he subjected to a particularly severe occupation regime. Hiro-Hito, Emperor of Japan, in invading China during the last Sino-Japanese conflict of 1937-45, wrote one of the darkest pages in Japanese history, an episode called “the rape of Nanking”. Large-scale massacres immediately began. Executions with bayonet or saber. Rape and mutilation. The “Rape of Nanking” ranks high among the crimes against humanity committed in XXth century even if the Japanese government continues to deny its importance.

The rapprochement of Germany, Italy and Japan resulted in the signing of several treaties of alliance; in November 1936, the Rome-Berlin axis was proclaimed and, on November 25, 1936, an *Antikomintern* (non-aggression) pact to which Italy adhered the following year was signed between Japan and Germany. The three states constituted the Axis powers. The sneaky Japanese attack (December 7, 1941) on Pearl Harbor, which destroyed almost all of the American navy in the Pacific zone, marked the “awakening of America” and the intervention of the United States in the Second world War.

Dazzling glow, black silence.

To put an end to this madness, the man imagined an even more terrifying madness by creating his nuclear apocalypse. Man began to despair again at his own end except that this time around, unlike religious apocalypses, there will be no revival, the nuclear apocalypse is the “final solution” without “singing tomorrow.” It was always so when humanity let itself be carried away by brutality disguised as religious ecstasy except that this time, man was overwhelmed by catastrophes no longer divine but by those which he himself provoked. Thus in all aspects of life, man will always have chosen thanatos.

On August 6 and 9, 1945, the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were literally “brought back to the Stone Age”, the favorite expression of the great boss of the US Air Force at the time, General Curtis Le May. Throughout his presidency, Harry Truman claimed that the destruction of Hiroshima and



Nagasaki had saved a quarter of a million human lives. And yet, even General Dwight Eisenhower informed his superiors “that Japan was already beaten, that its reissue was only a matter of the day and that the use of the bomb was completely unnecessary. So why the Japanese holocaust? Eight months earlier, on February 13, 1945, Winston Churchill ordered the total destruction of Dresden. However, as the aerial photographs of the English Mosquito planes later showed, Dresden was totally devoid of German military installations and had no defense system. So why the German holocaust? Answer in *Chronicle of World War II* , page 606 :

“One can wonder, at the end of this murderous raid, why a historic city without any military interest was so devastated. The Americans in particular - although they participated fully in it - called it “terrorist.” “

Words are unable to describe what is needed by those who do not know what horror represents. (Apocalypse Now, Francis Ford Coppola)

But above all, why a second atomic bomb, that of Nagasaki, when Japan was already “knocked out” by that of Hiroshima? Dresden (400,000 dead), Hiroshima (140,000) and Nagasaki (80,000) were, in fact, only guinea-pig towns whose destruction was intended to militarily impress the Soviets and marked “unofficially” the beginning of the cold war: strategy of terror concocted by the Churchill-Truman tandem. The secrecy of this powerful explosive completely changed the diplomatic balance in favor of the allies. It therefore remained to demonstrate to the Russians that we had the logistical capacities to use it. Unthinkable for the allies, the prospect of a typically anthropocentric atheistic millenarianism, economically communist and geopolitically universalist without any transcendental dimension, in short which rejects the religion of God in favor of the religion of the State. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the cities designated for the dramatic demonstration of modern terror. As a demonic scenario, even the gods never did better. *Homo sapiens* or *Homo demens* , “that’s the question! “ (Frédéric F. Clairmonte)

We have to admit that since the Renaissance, despite laws, codes, religions, States, reason and knowledge, that after Auschwitz, after “Little Boy” and “Fat Man”, humanism has lamentably failed.

The two great world wars demonstrated without trial the collapse of all progressive ideals, the collapse of the Nietzschean superman and superheroes brutally revealing the self-destructive potential of Western societies, showing the defeat of humanism struck down as much by the corporatism of ‘State (Communist Russia) than private corporatism. (Capitalist West)

In short, the end of the Second World War represents a major turning point in the neurotic expression of collective fears : fear of delinquents, fear of drugs, fear of communists, fear of anarchists, fear of atheists, finally by rummaging in the hidden corners. withdrawn from our collective unconscious, fear of the barbarian Christian yet civilized that we have become, capable of once again using the infernal energy of the evil atom against ourselves, against life.

The dark shadows of modernity.

In French America, the publication in 1948 of *Refus global* by the painter Borduas disturbed the peaceful tranquility of Montreal and the province of Quebec in general. Written by the painter Borduas and co-signed by around fifteen painters, sculptors, dancers and photographers, this anarco-artistico-political plea virulently denounces a sclerotic society: “refusal to turn a blind eye to the vices, the deceptions perpetrated under hatcheries Knowledge. (...) Refusal to serve, refusal of any intention, harmful weapon of reason. “In August 1948, a weekly covers the front page of the launch of the manifesto in these terms:” The Automatists announce the Christian decadence and prophesy the advent of the regime of instinct. All over the world, the “dictatorship of reason” is put in the dock. It is clear that the revolt is brewing, that the need for liberation is making its nest, that the foundations of the ideology of conservation are shaken. “ *Refus global* (...) is a sign that must be extended, that must be read over half a century. “(Laurent Mailhot)

The economic crisis of 1929-1932, the excesses of savage capitalism, the progression of fascism in Europe are the proofs of Western decadence. The German concentration camps of the Second World War, the Soviet gulags show that the political class has lost all consideration for the human being, which Hiroshima confirmed. Progress, scientism, rationalism and materialism, all concepts of modernity, are denounced and threaten the fundamental integrity of humans and of course French-Canadian society. “English liberalism marks the reign of managers and businessmen and liberal economics puts the fate of the community in the hands of a few speculators. “Imperialist” rationalism is responsible for having emptied the Christian religion of charity and its substance, to keep only a “code of alms.” All the values of true Christian humanism are then betrayed. The revolutionary act will not be carried out on the political scene by the action of a group, but rather individually, by the grace of an “inner outpouring”, that the true artists in whom art is not degraded. to the rank of “art for old men and unoccupied rentiers”, know and reveal. This is why the situation demands a “total refusal” and a “revolutionary act.” ” (Robert Élie, “Rupture”, *la Relève*, February 1936) The table is set for Borduas and his *Refus global*, which is an exorcism of the fears that have paralyzed Quebec so much.

“The reign of multifaceted fear is over. In the mad hope of erasing the memory, I enumerate them: fear of prejudice - fear of public opinion - of persecution - of general disapproval, fear of being alone without God and the society which very infallibly isolates, fear of oneself - of one’s brother - of poverty - fear of the established order - of ridiculous justice, fear of new relationships, fear of the irrational, fear of necessities, fear of the sluices wide open on faith in man - in

future society, fear of all forms likely to trigger a transforming love, blue fear - red fear - white fear: link in our chain. “(Borduas)

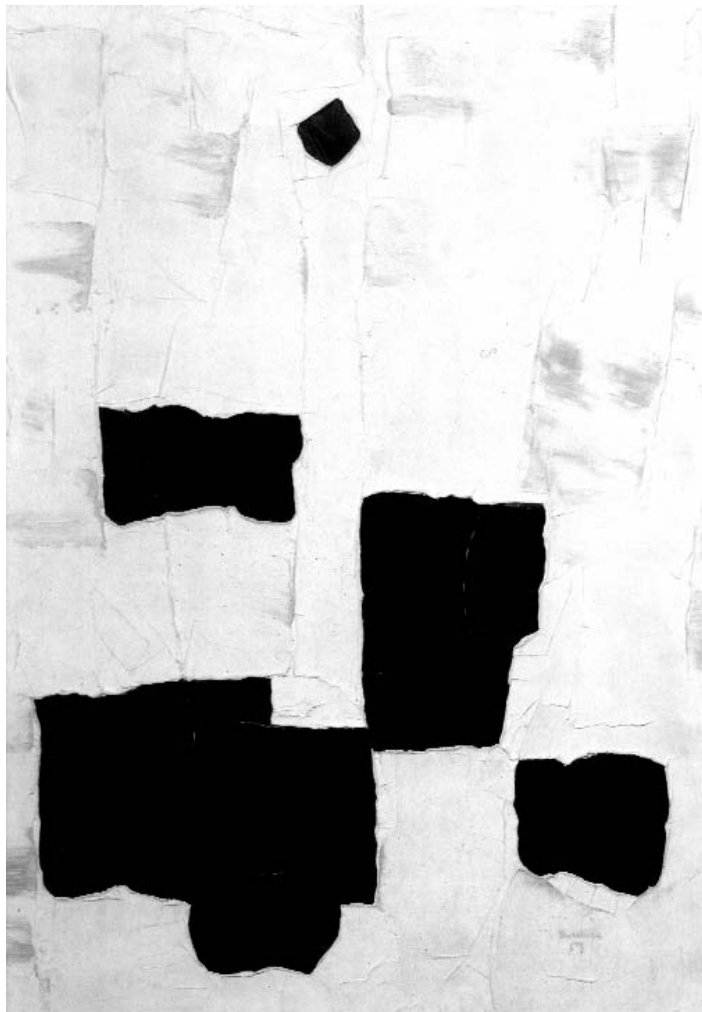
According to Pierre Popovic in *Les prémices d’un refus (global)*, from which we will be largely inspired : “ The enhancement of the Middle Ages presented by *Refus global* is one of the bases of the social discourse of the time. In this depiction of history, the thirteenth century of Albert the Great and of Saint Thomas is considered the moment of the apogee of Christian civilization, while the fourteenth century and the Renaissance set in motion an endless movement of decadence. to increase over the centuries. François-Marc Gagnon, in his masterful study of Borduas and his work, demonstrated that Borduas’ assertion of the thirteenth century greatness came from the influence of Pierre Mabilille’s book *Egrégories ou la vie des civilisations* . A very broad consensus counter-signed by all those who, by educational background or by ideological adherence, remain anchored to the virtues of *Summa Theologiae*, accredits this version of history and has certainly favored the adoption of this source. A similar reconstruction of the history of the Christian West notably presided over the reflections of the intellectuals of *La Relève* and *La Nouvelle Relève* during the 1930s and 1940s. Deeply marked by the works of Maritain and Berdiaef, the friends of Robert Charbonneau also relied on the splendours of the thirteenth century and on a rejection of the Renaissance to propose the establishment of a new Middle Ages and a new Christianity. authentic. “

This similarity between the presentation of the biblical history included in *Refus global* and in the issues of *La Relève* invites us to suppose that the breach opened by *La Relève* in the base of traditional Quebec ideology in a way prepares *Refus global*, or, in other words, that *Refus global* fits into this “heretical” breach. “

Quebec’s social discourse during the 1940s functioned on the basis of a hegemonic model which is none other than that of the historical novel from the Bible. The biblical story tells how the heroes, including Moses and Jesus, come to the defense of the threatened community and its “spoils.” “In Quebec, language, race and religion, Father Groulx’s triple watchword, were the community values of society defended because they were inherent in its” salvation. “ “

According to Marc Angenot, a broader analysis of the texts, reviews, political speeches and press articles of the 1940s leads us to posit that a “fundamental thematic paradigm” presides over all the ideological debates of the time and constitutes the essential backbone of the competitive worldviews constructed by whistleblowers. We can translate this fundamental thematic paradigm as follows: we are all French-Canadians and we are threatened. This paradigm of the threatened community most often leads to a defensive discourse, where it is a question of preserving a treasure coveted by devious enemies, since they have already entered the citadel, since they are “among us.” “(Marc Angenot, “Social discourse: overall problematic “, *Cahiers de recherche sociologique*, II: 1, April 1984 in Popovic, *Les prémices d’un refus*)

“Small people from a Jansenist colony, isolated, defeated, defenseless against the invasion, of all the congregations of France and Navarre, struggling to per-



étoile noire



Composition 69

Borduas

petuate in these places blessed with fear (this is the beginning -of-wisdom!) the prestige and benefits of Catholicism abused in Europe. Heirs to papal authority, mechanical, unanswerable, great masters of obscurantist methods, our educational institutions therefore have the means to organize as a monopoly the reign of exploitative memory, of immobile reason, of harmful intention. »(Borduas, Refus global)

The virulent discourse of *Refus global* against religious and political institutions, criticizing the intellectual and financial elites and the leaders of proletarian movements as so many traitors to the labor force, finds its source in the philosopher Berdiaef (*The New Middle Ages*) who inspired Robert Élie but above all Pierre Mabilie in *Égrégories ou la vie des civilisations* . Both authors state that XIIIth and XIVth centuries the Western Christian civilization reached its peak and since the Renaissance, has started a movement decomposition values that led all religious institutions will, to political and economic the decay of the West including wars, genocide and nuclear weapons of mass destruction of the XXth century marked the peak. This libertarian advocacy discourse in the middle of the XXth century fits in continuity hardly heretical currents of medieval times denouncing the betrayal of the Church.

To understand the allusions to the Middle Ages in the *Refus global* , it is necessary to seek to understand how it represents both the apogee and the decline of Christian civilization.

At that time, the *New Testament* posed a problem for the clergy keen on royalty because it must be understood that Christ laid the foundations for a new relationship between men. It abolishes all ethnic, social and racial barriers in favor of a universal brotherhood identical to Greek cosmopolitanism but based on a new commandment, that of reciprocal love. In this sense, the Eucharist is a striking ceremony. Indeed, all the religions of Antiquity, as much in the East as in the West, proposed prescriptions on purity and especially detailed dietary restrictions which manifested the ethnicity of believers and were objects of divisions between men. No Jew, Egyptian, Persian, Abyssinian, Chaldean of different faiths could eat or drink together, they could hardly speak to each other. The Christian communion comes to abolish all this archaic segregation and rather proposed the friendly meal in the sharing. By addressing all peoples without restriction, Christianity thus became the first possible universal religion and the Eucharist was its supreme manifestation.

In this sense, the analysis of Christic messianism according to Marcel Gauchet in *Désenchantement du monde* is very revealing. For him, with Jesus, we are witnessing a complete reversal of attitudes and values. While the Jews await a messiah, a sort of universal emperor whose omnipotence will guide them towards total domination; Here comes Jesus, at the antipodes of the desired expectations. While waiting for a monarch of the world at the top of the pyramid, above, Jesus, he is below, “any of the common men.” “” Where the King of the last days would have called for war, Jesus proclaims love. »Radical reversal in which Jesus invites us to free ourselves from all desire for earthly domination. In the *New Testament* , no trace of penance, of indulgence to buy to save one’s soul and above all no supremacy is granted to the Apostles and to

the Fathers of the Church, still less the right to enrich themselves from the work of the poor. For them, it was undeniable that the moral perversion of the Church and the political elite was responsible for their material misery. Marked by the desire for a return to a spiritual ideal, the peasants want to imitate the Christ of the Gospels and live in union with God. To do this, they transformed the teaching of Christ into daily evangelical action. Beyond the pejorative meaning of the word, heresy is above all the expression of social resentment with inevitably political consequences.

Mabilie’s text is very explicit on this subject : “religions were at the origin of systems intended to free man from his terrors and allow a more serene examination of the world. Then, they constituted obstacles more and more dangerous as much for the development of the intelligence as for the examination of the sensitivity ” (quoted by Gagnon in Borduas, p.254)

These dangerous obstacles, mainly the dogmatism of the Catholic Church, are part of the customs and traditions that form what sociologist Marcel Rioux calls “the ideology of conservation.” Borduas therefore tried to instill a dynamic vision for the French-Canadian to wake up, out of his torpor. This position of Borduas is in line with what the authors Michaël Lowry and Robert Sayre, in their work *Revolt and Melancholy* , identify as “restitutionist” romanticism in which most of the great writers and artists of the last century can be found. This movement defines itself as aspiring to a restitution of the Middle Ages and medieval Christian justice and focuses on agrarian society and the feeling of community that it opposes to bourgeois individualism and denounces the extreme loneliness in which capitalist society leaves it. who knows little between people but relationships of money. The crooked church has teamed up with the powers of money and turned the world into a “great dead corpse.” Capitalism has tarnished Christian values in the same way the machine has destroyed fine craftsmanship.

To neutralize Catholic dogmatism, Borduas opposed it with a metaphysics of creation, a religion of art linking it to a “greater knowledge of oneself and of what links man to the universe”. made in the tradition of Goethe and the other romantics.

Influenced by the European nabi movement, (The nabi movement strives to rediscover the sacred character of art and is characterized by the use of large flat areas of color having as its main theme the study of light. The nabi is a movement at the same time artistic, intellectual and spiritual.) his mentor the painter Ozias Leduc taught him very young that painting fulfills a priestly and metaphysical function : art has meaning only if it aspires to Redemption, that is it is based on a desire to improve the world. As its name suggests, “nabi”, a Hebrew word meaning “prophet” gives the artist the title of romantic seer who believes in the reconciling power of peoples. Borduas then studied religious art at the prestigious Ateliers d’Art Sacré in Paris. This stay in France allowed him to discover the great works of European painters including Cézanne, who would have a decisive influence on his early works. He also undertook research with French Nabis artists on the integration of abstract art into religious art. While reading *L’Amour fou* by surrealist André Breton, he discovered the famous

advice of Leonardo da Vinci urging his students to take a long look at an old wall to see there appear in its cracks and stains shapes that the painter only has to copy afterwards. Borduas recreates Leonardo's "old wall" by spontaneously drawing, without preconceived idea, a few lines which will serve as a canvas for the application of oil or gouache. He began to produce abstract works, becoming more interested in the act of painting than in themes. The artist had to reject any form of preparation such as the choice of the subject or the sketches to concentrate only on the emotions of the moment and the unconscious impulses. From these automatic gestures was born the concept of pictorial automatism. The painting *Green Abstraction* (1941) is Borduas' first Automatist work.

For two centuries now, romanticism has remained a seemingly indecipherable enigma that resists attempts to reduce it to a common denominator. The only one that can hold up is the paradox which then qualifies the fabulously contradictory character of romanticism which is both revolutionary and / or counter-revolutionary, individualist and / or community, realistic and / or fantastic, retrograde and / or utopian, activist and / or contemplative, rebellious and / or melancholy, mystical and / or sensual.

From mysticism, the romantics have retained that suffering is noble, that failure is better than material success obtained by the betrayal of one's integrity and the exploitation of one's fellows. Sincerity, authenticity, intensity of feelings and above all a taste for challenge imply a perpetual struggle against the oppressive forces of the Church, of savage capitalism; against the cynicism of the state and the apathy of the amorphous majority; in short, even if these values were doomed to fail, it was courageous, just and honorable to fight while compromising and surviving was synonymous with cowardice and betrayal. Material failure is irrelevant. Glory, financial success, security are ridiculous compared to what matters alone ; respect for oneself towards one's moral, artistic and human goals. Sacrifice, heroism, nobility, such are the sources of life and of all action of romantic idealism. (Berlin Isaiah, *The Twisted Wood of Humanity*)

Usually, writers, poets and painters are referred to as *romantic*, while the term *romantic idealism* is reserved for political ideologies. Both romanticism and idealism, however, share common values : social change, personal growth, the creative imagination, and the importance of myth and the unconscious. At the start, there is an obvious direction from art to politics. First, "a new image of the artist, who raised above other men not only his genius, but also his heroic disposition to live and die for the sacred vision that was in him. This gave the artist a mission of a metaphysical and mystical order. One of the great thinkers of Romanticism, the poet Saint-Martin explained in these terms the spiritual filiation intrinsic to the Romantic movement but above all explains the saving mission which falls to the artist via his creative genius.

"In the current state of things, man keeps in the depths of himself, the debris of his first destiny and the obscure reminiscence of the primitive paradise. If he manages to listen to the interior signs that are given to him, to come back down in him, until he can, by a very spiritual magic, seize again the germs which cover in his soul, he will carry out his own reintegration in God. ; but at the

same time, he will restore the whole creation in the primordial unity. Only man, craftsman of the fall, can be the worker of reconciliation, the savior of nature. He is a being in charge of continuing God, where God no longer knows how to know himself ... He continues it in the order of manifestations and emanations, because there God makes himself known only through his images and his representatives (...) because the act of the poet is sacred and literally creative. " (quoted by Albert Beguin, in *The romantic soul and the dream*, Librairie José Corti, Paris, 1939, p.52)

Thus the artist, the poet, are absolute mediators who perceive in them the signs of the divine. Their mission is therefore to announce and present this divine to all men. And this divine is presented as a force in perpetual becoming which is revealed to us by the two parallel evolutions of nature and history.

The perception of unity is an inescapable premise that the philosophers of nature apply to the outside world, but which has its source in an entirely internal and properly spiritual experience : this starting point is that of the mystics of all times, it does not matter their religious origin for which the primitive datum is divine unity, from which they feel excluded and where they aspire to return by way of mystical illumination. All romantic artists, all naturalist thinkers will explain that the process of terrestrial and cosmic becoming passes through a return to the lost unity. The march of life towards reintegration is inevitable, this is the meaning of human history.

Second, a shift towards politics : "it was this same ideal that animated and transformed the concept of nations, classes or minorities, through their fierce struggles for freedom at all costs. It (this idea) took a more fatal form in the cult of the leader, creator of a new social order as of a work of art, which models men in the same way that the composer models sounds and the painter them. colors; men too weak to rise by the force of their own will. » (Berlin, *The crooked wood of humanity*, p.228)

Both romanticism and idealism are also presented as soteriologies ie as doctrines of the salvation of humanity which implies the coming of a savior, either the artist for romanticism, or the politician for idealism. So much so that we find romantics and idealists as much on the left as on the right and even romantics and idealists successively on the left and on the right and vice versa. The romantic and the idealist have an incredible capacity to accept their contradiction. What matters is to be a creator even if this implies, like the saint and the martyr, a life of sacrifice.

Romanticism like primitive Christianity is distinguished by its identification with the underprivileged. In them the human drama expresses the confusion of the world. The first concern of novelists, poets, painters and thinkers of the mid-eighteenthth century based on everything that was source of injustice, oppression, falsehood in human relationships, the silent submission to the artificial, in short source of revolt, of despair, of poverty, of disarray among so many men. For them greed, selfishness, spiritual blindness are the vices of civilization. This acute sense of alienation is experienced as an inner exile, a deep nostalgia for a pre-capitalist past which turns into a utopia looking to the future.

The romantic is opposed to capitalist-industrial modernity which shamelessly exploits both nature and human beings for strictly economic ends without regard to the well-being of the community; what has been called the “disenchantment of the world” The degradation of human relationships, the poisoning of the air by industrial fumes, the dissolution of qualitative values all stem from this source of corruption : market quantification and mechanization of being.

Faced with this observation, the romantics were certain that by dint of courage and self-sacrifice, societies could be transformed in the light of just ideals supported by sufficient fervor and devotion. Refusing the religious dogmatism of both Catholicism and Protestantism, the romantic spirit aspires to a new religiosity or rather a spirituality based on the unity of man, nature and the universe leading to universality, a real communion between people of all origins and cultures. This utopian aspiration commands a revolution against the modern state where the bureaucracy enslaves human beings to a system of mechanical gears as impersonal as a factory. Let us summarize : thus this “left” romanticism, mainly experienced by artists, poets, certain philosophers, writers and some minority politicians, denounces the alienation of human relations, the destruction of nature, the dissolution of the community bonds of solidarity, the isolation of the individual, the only market value, degrading urban living conditions.

“Most poets, novelists, painters were grieved by the new order and denied it in a hundred ways ... Dickens satirized the stock-pilots, the Manchester individualists, the utilities, the pretentious *self-made man* . Balzac and Zola, painting the new financial order with documentary realism, put beyond any doubt its degradation and its uncleanness. Other artists, along with Morris, turned to the Middle Ages, where Overbeck and Hoffmann in Germany, Chateaubriand and Hugo in France, had preceded them. Others, with Browning, turned to Renaissance Italy; with Doughty, towards primitive Arabia; with Melville and Gauguin, towards the seas of the south; with Thoreau, towards the primitive forests; with Tolstoy, towards the peasants. What were they looking for? Very simple things that could not be found between the railway terminus and the factory: animal self-love, the color in the exterior setting and the emotional depth in the interior landscape, a life lived for its own. values, instead of an adulterated life. » (Mumford, *Technique et Civilization*, p.187-188)

In contrast, for the downright pragmatic and capitalist political establishment, the beginning of XXth century appeared as the triumph of science and technology and thus consecrated the progressive philosophy that “every effort must be turned to the rational organization of industry, based, in particular, on scientific progress. » (Papon, *Le temps des ruptures*, p.24)

“We believe that we can posit as a principle that, in the new political order, social organization must have as its sole and permanent object the best possible application to the satisfaction of human needs the knowledge acquired in the sciences, in fine arts and arts and crafts. “ (Saint-Simon)

Thus the “right” utopias (positivist idealism) called on modernity to surpass itself and asked rationalism and scientific and technological progress to complete the organization of society. As such, the art nouveau of the 1900s is char-

acteristic of the general positivism expressed by the political, scientific and financial elites of the Belle Époque. The opulence of the carefree bourgeoisie carried by liberal capitalism gives the elite airs of optimism and frivolity which masked the harsh social-economic realities of the working classes as if the French revolution of 1789 had never taken place. Art Nouveau celebrated individualism primarily through provocative architectural motifs. From the perfumed boudoirs to the boxes of the Opera then to the private rooms of the nocturnal cabarets, a carefree and idle life was spread out, deaf to rumbling threats. The *Scream* by Munch as prescient warning is of course ignored. The machine replaced all other sources of values, and the doctrine of progress tolerated no opponent. The worker himself lived with his family in unhealthy housing and neighborhoods ravaged by terrible epidemics. The rich were afraid of the poor and the poor feared hunger, disease, unemployment; a constant surplus of unemployed was necessary for wages to remain so low and all with the blessing of the clergy. It is in this historical context that *Refus global* is situated .

Borduas’ manifesto denounced the old conservative ideology and proclaimed the need for greater openness to currents of universal thought. At that time, the Catholic Church controlled the entire educational system and had considerable influence on the political and judicial world. In “ *Refus global* “, Borduas questioned the authority of the Church, accused the government of Quebec of keeping the nation in “ great darkness “ and urged Quebecers to reject this backward existence by refusing to obey like sheep. to established authority. In this climate, Borduas’ ideas were indeed revolutionary and guided the Quebec intelligentsia towards its great “ *Quiet Revolution* ”. According to him, French Canadians had to abandon their old culture and create a new one based on emotions, sensations and, on what he called “ magic “ :

“To break definitively with all the habits of society, to dissociate oneself from its utilitarian spirit. Refusal to knowingly be below our psychic possibilities. Refusal to close our eyes to the vices, the deceptions perpetrated under the guise of knowledge, of service rendered, of due recognition. (...) Make way for magic ! Make way for objective mysteries ! Make way for love ! Make way for the necessities ! “(...)

“Consciences are illuminated by the invigorating contact with accursed poets: these men who, without being monsters, dare to express loud and clear what the most unhappy of us stifle in the shame of oneself and the terror of being. engulfed alive. A little light is shed on the example of these men who are the first to accept the present worries, so painful, so lost girls. The answers they provide have a different value of confusion, precision and freshness than the endless tunes offered in Quebec and in seminars around the world.

The borders of our dreams are no longer the same.

Dizziness takes us at nightfall from the rags of once overloaded horizons. The shame of hopeless serfdom gives way to the pride of a possible freedom to be conquered by hard struggle. To hell with the bottle brush and the hat! A thousand times they extorted what they once gave. »(Borduas, *Refus global*)

“ *Refus global* is only in appearance a break with religion. It is actually a change of religion. It must be seen that it is at the moment when Quebec Christianity or very particular Quebec Catholicism will begin to unravel that the *Refus global* arrives first with a limited echo, and then with an extraordinary critical and ideological fortune. *Refus global* is, basically, the new Quebec gospel which replaced the old one and it is a gospel of creation, a creativist gospel, and I believe that it is at the origin of this true creativist ideology which reigns everywhere. in society, in schools, in pedagogy and therefore in personal expression. ” (Jean Larose, cited by Vigneault in Identity and modernity in art in Quebec, p, 171)

Borduas’ atheism (a mystic without divine) does not prevent her from adopting an active, secular spirituality, an inner exploration, a listening to what is expressed the least, even an encounter with the unforeseen or the unknown that the artist restores on his canvas. Borduas professed the domination of instinct over the intellect, the reign of “the vital impetus” proclaimed by the philosopher Bergson. Borduas is a mystic, an a – political being and if there is failure and there is one, it is at this level that we must look for it. The failure of Borduas is the same of all the avant-garde of the century who believed that art would be the new religion of the new man, the failure of Borduas is a soteriological failure based on a messianic illusion. Like all the other avant-gardes, the *Refus global* fell into the trap of the doctrine of salvation for the advent of a new man “made in Quebec.” That Borduas published his manifesto under the auspices of the Mythra-Mythe publishing house that he created is very revealing.

The worship of Mithra, god of Vedic India who lasted until Christianity which was largely inspired by it, is assimilated to the myth of the Savior, his birth is announced by a comet and marks the origin of the messianic duty. In addition, the liturgy of Mithras included a ceremonial in the form of a banquet celebrated by the Magi (Eucharist) where the bread and wine, shared among the guests, bestowed on the guests strength and wisdom in this life and glorious immortality in the other. Thanks to this rite, the initiate became the equal of God and marks the victory of the spiritual over materialism.

For Borduas, the revolution is above all internal and his work will testify : “The cycle of external nature is completed by Renoir, Degas, Manet. The cycle of proper expression, of the means employed, intermediate between the artist and the visible world, is closed by cubism, only one remains open that of the invisible world...” (Borduas) And Gauvreau concludes with this beautiful definition of automatism : “After the exhaustion of the exploration of the outside, there remains only one opening for the knowledge of life, for the vibrant, a dizzyingly vast opening : THE EXPLORATION OF THE INSIDE. » (Cited in Gagnon, Borduas, 1978, p.351)

So that *Refus global* must be associated mainly with the theology of liberation which simultaneously developed in the colonized countries. Borduas’ dream of a “resplendent anarchy” is supported by an obvious messianism where many will be called for few chosen: “I know that we are suffering horribly from the universal tragedy, that a heroic era has long begun for a few. - some, that it will have to extend to all, that only the noblest, the bravest, the purest will survive.

“ (Way to taste a piece of art (1943) in Writings I, critical edition, PUM-UQAM, 1987 P.581)

The resistance of the public to the transgressions requested by Borduas, will confine it to the role of insurgent with a criminal identity. From a prophet, he became a martyr during his lifetime, like Saint-Jean Baptiste who incarnates “the French-Canadian announcer of the Providential Mission in the desert of the Quebec Promised Land”, he will know the failure of his saving mission for freedom and both individual and collective autonomy. (Heinz Weinmann cited in Louise Vigneault, Identity and modernity in art in Quebec, p.166)

The ostracism reserved for Borduas after the publication of his manifesto speaks for itself Thus the project of “changing the human” by producing a “new spectator” can sometimes, marginally succeed, but often a few decades later its saving mission to societal reach is a failure. Only Futurism and Constructivism were able for a certain time to keep alive the illusion of an art that is effectively revolutionary and inscribed in reality because it was supported by the political powers in place for propaganda purposes. As an actor of change, the artist can only act alone and his work always relegated to the background. Art has never saved the world, either, but it has managed to save destinies, mainly and especially that of the artist himself and second, the destiny of a few amateurs.

On the experience of the painter Borduas as an influence on society, Marcelle Ferron, a few decades later, remarked : “to paint, that was of no consequence. But let a painter dare to speak up...” Besides, Borduas is better known in Quebec for his manifesto than for his paintings. Even if Borduas’ canvases exceeded by their modernity all of our literature, which was still backward at the time, it is thanks to the manifesto and other writings that creative freedom passed from the domain of painting to that of ideas and marked the awakening French-Canadian intellectuals. According to the essayist Pierre Vadeboncoeur in *The Authority of the People* , there was a transfer from pictorial modernity to the written word thanks to Borduas. It is clear that at the end of the 1940s the pictorial revolution of the Automatists was ahead of our literature by its modernity. *Global refusal* , it is the stick of dynamite which by exploding freed us from the jam paralyzing our destiny. However, he paid dearly for his desire to drive the obscurantism he suffered from outside Quebec.

Borduas will be the first to recognize that his manifesto has hurt him a lot. The long-awaited awakening of the Quebec people following the publication of the manifesto is far from being realized. On the contrary, Borduas is put on the bench of society. Under pressure from the clergy, the education ministry withdrew his job as a professor at the École du Meuble in Montreal. Without financial resources, his wife Gabrielle and her three children deserted the matrimonial home. Depressed, he then thought of suicide, changed his mind and decided to leave the suffocating atmosphere of the beautiful province. Rejected by Quebec conservatism, he went into exile in New York where he sought his reintegration in the pursuit of artistic success.

It was during his exile in New York that Borduas finally understood that art was a motor of revolutionary change only for those who practiced it or were interest-

ed in it. From now on, he will seek to save his own skin rather than save the world. The primary vocation of man is to transform himself ; we know it from Pic de Mirandole. Man is alone in the face of infinity and Borduas' work has become, in his own words, more "cosmic." The spirit of man and the universal soul come together : by saving himself, man becomes the actor of his reintegration into the unity of the world.

Painting will be the only homeland that Borduas claimed. He confided to Jean-Éthier-Blais in *Vie des arts* : "I am on the margins, I am not one of them, one of yours. "" And then I first tasted the pleasure of being rootless, which was to lead me here. Basically the element of the world that remains the most permanent to me, the only one perhaps, is painting, physical painting, matter, paste. This is my native soil, this is my land. Without it I am uprooted. With her, whether I'm in Paris or elsewhere, it doesn't matter - I'm at home. »(Borduas Paul-Émile, *Écrits I*, p.674)

Like an ascetic on the road to Enlightenment, Borduas subsequently sought to resolve more metaphysical questions during his wanderings between Paris and New York as so many artistic pilgrimages of healing. Let us remember the quest of the pioneers of abstraction such as Kandinsky, Malevich and Mondrian, the modern initiators of an artistic metaphysical reflection who answered major religious or mystical questions, the same ones who challenged Borduas. The cosmos-material according to Borduas is made of a unique material which evolves while refining itself. An intriguing philosophical resemblance between Malevich's words and those of Borduas is verified in these words : "Simplify, purify painting" - create "cosmic canvases", that is to say "giving an impression of the world that is not no longer limited to man but who participates in the universal. "

From sidereal white to telluric black.

With all due respect to the great physician and philosopher Jacques Ferron who did not carry Borduas in his heart - by treating him as an "academic dresser", "cherub" among the surrealist "seraphim", known thanks to a "blister of renown" founded on the ostracism from which he suffered - the work of Borduas remains a major and original contribution to international abstract art in philosophical continuity with the great initiators of the movement.

Of Mondrian's works, Borduas wrote : " I spontaneously recognized the finest light I had ever seen in painting. And "light" was in time, for me, synonymous with " space. "We can not separate the design of the pictorial space of Borduas of spatial treatment of theosophical inspiration as developed by the aesthetics of Kandinsky, Mondrian and Malevich. But the direction taken by Borduas , leads towards a tandem light / space closer to that of Malevich than any other.

In exile from Montreal to the USA, Borduas signed on April 4, 1953, the lease of a workshop in Provincetown at 190 Bradford Street, but could not take possession until the 23rd. He decided to go visit New York. *White Square* by Malevich, that many experts consider the icon of the XXth century, is present

on the walls of the Museum of Contemporary Art in New York since the 1930s, he was one of the first tables to be admitted to the venerable institution and therefore influenced several generations of artists. It is unthinkable to imagine that Borduas passed by without seeing it, on the contrary not only did he see it but he probably contemplated it. He was subsequently fascinated by monochrome until the end of his days.

Back at his studio in Provincetown, Borduas adopted the dualism of black and white. But like the dunes of Cape Cod, white dominates and sparkles with a thousand lights. The artist's gaze suddenly freed itself from Quebec oppression. The spatula fiercely attacks the surface of the painting, the jets of color fuse, dance, blend spontaneously without pre-established scenography as before. The canvas, Borduas feels it, becomes the site of an unprecedented pictorial event. (Guy Robert, *Borduas or the Quebec cultural dilemma*)

The signs are flying (1953) and *La blanche envolée* (1954) bear witness to this, they are New York "supremacist" works created shortly after Borduas' arrival in the United States which undoubtedly tend towards monochrome. and "seem to indicate that, during this period, a force was exerted great enough on the painter's development to make him change its course. » (FM Gagnon, Borduas, p.344) Carried away by a creative impulse that is both tormented and serene, Borduas painted around forty canvases, including 24 that the renowned Passadoit gallery decided to exhibit from January 5 to 23, 1954, ie less than 6 months after arriving in New York. A feat, considering that painters in New York number in the thousands. His works circulate more both locally and abroad. Another exhibition is presented in April at the gallery Hendler Philadelphia, while in the summer, he participated in the XXVIIth Venice Biennale. In October of the same year, he returned to Montreal to present the exhibition " En route ". Seventeen oils and six inks take place on the picture rails of the Agnès Lefort gallery. Critics noticed an extraordinary development of his style in contact with American abstract expressionism, whose exhibitions he regularly visited.

Borduas is a mystic who received the call of white, enlightenment. In less than five years, he emerged from the "Great Darkness" and came to rub shoulders with infinite whiteness. With his paintings "more and more white" such as *Shimmering* and *Hesitation* Borduas came even closer to the mystical radicalism of Malevich: "In these new monochromes, (sic) the color even in trace in the white, no longer has its place. Only the physical light playing on the reliefs of the paste somewhat animates the pure surfaces that these paintings have become. »More and more white backgrounds impose themselves with force, compromising even the existence of signs. (*The signs fly away*) "Although he does not make up his mind, one can wonder if the all-white painting, reduced to its only white background, did not already seem to him like the extreme limit that he proposed to himself. to achieve. " (FM Gagnon, Borduas, p. 342, 452)

Stylistic affinities also develop between abstract expressionism (de Kooning, Kline) and the automatism of Borduas where signs like matter are transformed into energy dispersed in packets like quanta unevenly dispersed in the universe. In this sense the whole cosmos is in evolution, in continual transformation ;

major idea of the philosopher Bergson, of which Borduas is a faithful reader, called “creative evolution.” Then the intervention of man in this universe is not to represent it but to integrate into it, a major idea developed by the romantic movement. Failing to change society, the pictorial art of Borduas will have allowed him to force the cosmic doors which separate us from the invisible world and to succeed at least in his spiritual quest. Man becomes aware of himself in the trials he encounters. His exile, his solitude opened the doors of contemplation to him.

After a few months of assiduous work and wanting to take up new challenges, Borduas decides to leave Provincetown, whose tranquility reminds him too much of the other province he has recently left. In September 1953, he set up his studio at 119 East on 17th street near Greenwich Village landmark of the nascent against-culture. He reconnected with the libertarian spirit of the “big apple”, he who wanted the reign of anarchy.

He frequents the “Club” on 8th Street where artists of abstract expressionism, Pollock, Kline, Motherwell, de Kooning exhibit and give lectures which he attends without intervening with a poor command of English. There he discovered an incredible community of mind with hundreds of ostracized like him : university professors, poets, musicians, painters, Broadway artists and even men of science, all cripples of McCarthyism, American Inquisition of the XXth century. Everyone denounced the radioactive butchery of “Big boy” like thousands of honest people who lost their jobs and hundreds of others who saw their careers shattered because they have not yet recovered from this apocalyptic vision of thousands of Japanese zombies burned to life. With a little luck, he could have run into Jack Kerouac who also frequented the place. Borduas felt for the first time since 1948 that he had finally met those he hoped to carry out the great social project that is his. Not only is he no longer alone, but tens of thousands of “p’tits Borduas” placed in the bench of society populate America. It was at this moment that he wrote to Gauvreau that the future is America.

In another letter in 1954, Borduas wrote to know the work of “Pollock, Kline and ten other young American painters”. Like them, Borduas was never able to rule out the existential conflicts of the 1950s resulting from the two world wars, the holocaust of Auschwitz and the nuclear apocalypse of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this atomic bomb which traumatized him so much (“The H hour of total sacrifice is close to us.”) And all the painters of this period, especially the American painters. The European influence of white suprematism has come to juxtapose both in his mind and on the canvas, the “black star” of American abstract expressionism.

From that day on, all of Borduas’ works will reflect the dualism of life by adopting until the end of his days the dialectic chromatic of black and white. Borduas, to celebrate the first year of his exile and to give a real thumbs up to all those who denigrated him, exhibited in October 1954 at the Galerie Lefort 17 oils and 6 unpublished inks with nervous writing using the gestural technique the splash (splash) and dripping (dripping) used by American painters.

More and more, critics have noticed that since his stay in New York Borduas’

canvases have exploded as if he was trying to express “the entire American continent on the alert grappling with this explosive power of the atom. Quietly, Borduas frees himself from surrealist influences and is confronted with the use of black by American painters to emphasize the precariousness of the human condition. Suddenly the signs, the objects burst. (*Trophies of an ancient victory*) This notion of the atomized bursting of the object expressed by the chromatic duality of white and black is typical of the influence of American abstract expressionism on his work.

This duality is so fundamental that Borduas will never resolve to overcome this antagonism by creating a pure monochrome in his work. The contrasts of black and white were always present, eternal combat of the Light against the forces of Darkness, of the order conquering chaos : “The Cosmic will no longer be chaos but the vertigo of an exorbitant order” he wrote to Gauvreau. But first, the cosmic vertigo of white had to be confronted with the dark fatality of the human condition. It was by frequenting the painters of New York bohemia that Borduas understood that, ultimately, the dualism between good and evil, the unshakeable foundation on which rested the manifesto *Refus global* , can only be retransmitted aesthetically by the duality between the white and black.

From the “restitutionist” romanticism expressed in the *Refus global* , Borduas, in exile, slipped quietly towards a resigned romanticism noting that industrialization is an irreversible process. Borduas could only rebel against the mechanization of the world and manifested a deep hostility to the artificial world of industrialization : the workers of the capitalist and communist factories were also all damned to live in distorted universes. Communism and capitalism represent two sides of the same decadent and perverse modern civilization.

Dehumanization, this modern disease is too deep and is eating away at society like cancer. This observation was experienced as a tragedy : “Man does not have the courage to take full responsibility for the next day. All his ingenuity serves only to slow down. All his ingenuity will not prevent the brakes from blowing up. “

On March 12, 1955, a text by Borduas appeared in the review *L’Autorité* which marked the final break with the Automatist movement. The end of the Automatists group sparked the shattering of the dream of building in Montreal a pictorial school capable of competing with that of New York and Paris. Despite several New York exhibitions, Borduas remained hungry for recognition of the mother country from his peers, the only one that would allow him to avenge the affront he suffered. He decided to leave the States for Paris where he would never succeed in obtaining the notoriety he had in New York.

In September of the same year he sailed for France and settled in the house-workshop of 19 Rousselet 8th arrondissement of Paris. He worked in his studio between exaltation and discouragement. His works are well received everywhere except in Paris where he struggles to break through. Borduas is bored in Paris and his health is declining. However, it was at this moment with a burst of creativity that he painted *The Dark Star*, probably his masterpiece. Borduas suddenly freed himself completely from surrealism, keeping from the automa-

tism only the spontaneous way of applying paint to the canvas. The Parisian years preceding his death became the time when Borduas, now convinced that the medievalist return was an illusion, that decadence was inevitable, affirmed his spiritual turn focused on a more personalized search for salvation. The spiritual Nabi influence is again felt in his painting. This one presents more pronounced flat areas and a chromatic tendency towards black and white. Typically an icon of abstract expressionism, *The Black Star* reflects well the existential angst of the first post-atomic generation. During the 1940s as he was developing the concept of Automatist painting, he looked to the future with some optimism. Fifteen years later and a few million dead decimated during the Second World War and the Korean War, not to mention the bodies missing in the Nazi concentration camps and the charred bodies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Borduas had to face the facts : he will never see this long-awaited new culture during his lifetime. He grew more and more disillusioned ; *The Dark Star* shows it well. He adopted an increasingly calligraphic style, in keeping with his plan for a new exile, this time in Japan. Unfortunately this project will never see the light of day.

Borduas expressed in the form of anguish and nostalgia the peaceful aspirations of the exiled self, which experiences its solitude as an implacable law of earthly existence. He sensed a smell of decay in haughty modern civilization, carried by waves of melancholy and despair. Borduas finally renounced the social revolution, no longer has confidence in the conquest of salvation by the human community : “I had faith in this tender youth, in the moral and spiritual evolution of crowds. (...) Of course, I am burning with love for the whole earth and its inhabitants. But I only have faith in a few men. » (In Guy Robert, Borduas or the Quebec cultural dilemma)

“Borduas never abdicated the spiritual. “(Éthier-Blais)

The last works of Borduas with prominent black spots are therefore mystical works linked to metaphysical questions focused on the misery of the human condition for which man himself is solely responsible. Borduas lost his illusions in man at the same time as Jack Kerouac, the “canuck”, lost his illusions in America. These two exiled French Canadians expressed in their work the “despair of the revolutionary without revolution” (Victor Lévy Beaulieu, Jack Kerouac, chicken essay) so characteristic of modern Quebec.

The increasingly lonely artist moves further away from society. A gulf grew between the “initiated” artist and the crowd. This existential “nausea” will result in the appearance of more imposing black spots on a white background which seem to “announce a descent into the void” : “My painting becomes more and more severe, black and white simplified ; I can’t help it ; it is my fate. » (Écrits II, p.1088) In the last paintings of his life, the twilight black completely invades the painting. Borduas’ artistic research ends prematurely with “ *Composition 69* ”, a painting in which almost the entire canvas is covered by imposing black impasto which overlap to form an almost monochrome black mortuary. At the top of the table, a few cracks let in a little white as a sort of cosmic call. On February 22, 1960, the painter died in his studio in Paris, victim of a heart attack. Beside the bed, on an easel throne *Composition 69* ...

His will ?

Composition 69 , this last lifelong painting characterized by extreme stripping is typical of abstract expressionism, to be compared to the work of Ad Reinhardt without the radical purity of its black monochrome. An American critic even going so far as to crown Borduas with the title of “the first Canadian abstract expressionist of international reputation. » (Gagnon, Borduas p.416)

“We civilizations now know that we are mortal” (Valéry)

“The ruin of great ideas and great ideals, those of convictions and beliefs that have been in tatters or in smoke, the mass of theories and shattered hopes” demonstrate a “spiritual void occupied by the insolent triumph of a technoscience which, since Hiroshima, foreshadows a catastrophe threatening the entire planet. A catastrophe, that of the End of Times for humanity and, which would not be due to the vaguely probable shock with other planets, or even to the divine will as it is expressed with anger in the Apocalypse of John, but a catastrophe for which man alone would bear the weight and the responsibility: by the perverse use of his reason and his freedom. » (Godin Christian, The end of humanity)

All these artistic movements of the revolutionary left before the first war were divided around 1917-1918 and subsequently presented themselves as autocracies subordinated to objectives of absolute power. Although most artists joined the anti-fascist movements, several others were receptive to either the anti-democratic and racist theories of the international nationalist right, or adhered to the secular communist religion which made a democratic Soviet regime as unlikely as a democratic Catholic Church. The artist then behaved like a reformer, activating transformative action exposed to the pathology of destructiveness. The Dadaists wallowed in nihilist anarchy, the Futurists slipped into fascism, the Russian constructivists / productivists adopted the aims of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Most surrealists joined the Communist Party because of the concept of revolution it projected. Breton, father of surrealism and its fireworks, led the movement with the same fundamentalist intransigence as a Lenin or a Stalin, before fleeing like many others in America, refusing to fight. Dali associated himself with Franco’s fascist aims, not to mention the Bauhaus artists who continued to offer their services to the Nazi and Stalinist regime from America. And each, waving his manifesto like a Gospel, could not endure any dissension or opposition convinced that he knew better than anyone what to stand for and had little time to waste considering other opinions. Every artistic movement of modern times has been built on pure and hard pretensions, not to say extremists who made criticism unacceptable, not hesitating to anathematize rivals, like Breton who with a few activists surrealists sabotaged the evening *Le cœur à barbe* organized by the Dadaists in 1923 . Through their intolerance against pluralism and their aesthetic dogmatism, these artistic movements have demonstrated the same absolutism as monotheistic religions and revolutionary dictatorships.

“They all created painting, architecture, sculpture, cinema, propaganda music in their own way. Thus, they reinvented an Art that touches humanity to the point

of persuasion. Art as dictatorship over a world shaped by its aesthetics is the unacknowledged dream of every creator. (...) Therefore, propaganda art can become delusional. » (Fabien Bellat, On the art of propaganda)

Finally, all were convinced that they could save humanity from the announced disaster of a collapsing Western culture, and all, from right to left, obsessed with the promised revolution and its great ideals, made a pact with the devil forgetting the great historical lessons from previous revolutions : all revolutions begin in purity and end in horror, like the Great Terror that followed the French Revolution. Any triumphant revolutionary movement is afraid of the counter-revolution so that freedom is annihilated in victory, such is the paradox of the revolution that the Soviet regime brilliantly illustrated : the realization of the political utopia pulverizes the freedom of its people. members, transforms freedom into violence.

If the artistic experience involves a spiritual experience then it can be a systematic experience either with the divine or the evil one. "Europe is certainly this continent where Plato, Saint Francis of Assisi, da Vinci, Descartes, Pascal, Newton, Kant, Hegel Kierkegaard or Nietzsche were born, the one where Aeschylus, Dante, Saint John of the Cross lived; but it was also the scene of the crimes of Phalaris, Heliogabalus, Robespierre, Stalin and Hitler, not to mention the others or their successors present and to come. All that was and remains, Europe swarmed it in America, Africa, Asia, Oceania for better and worse. But it is from Europe that the all-powerful disciples of Prometheus, Hercules, Daedalus, Tantalus and Faust also left, all heroes of knowledge and of power to whom men asked to learn what would allow them to become "like Gods." (Jean Brun, L'Europe philosophe, p. 367 et seq.)

Art like politics and religion want to take charge of the destiny of humanity. It was first of all the romantic poets, creators of the notion of the ideal in the years 1820-30, who made it a quasi-religious cult. Penetrated with the idea of a social mission, they saw themselves as visionaries charged with leading society towards salvation. The ideal becomes something to be accomplished. (Michel Lacroix, Is Having an Idea Really Reasonable ?, p.138-145)

"Idealism can become a passionate pretext for assassination. "

Whoever says commitment to fertilize a better world inevitably generates political, social and moral ideals to guide men. It will be up to the philosopher Kant to develop the capital thesis of idealism as a phenomenon of the idea in action. Its political postulate is stated as follows : freedom, peace, dignity and equality of human beings are the guiding principles guiding men so by the same fact, become the foundations of future civilization of the rule of law as an ideal of reason. So much so that the romantic idealists perpetuate the filiation with the Greek cosmopolitanism wanting that all the men are fellow-citizens in the only City of the world. Idealism is therefore presented as a desire to save the world from war, from barbarism. However, any desire to plan for future happiness risks becoming a prison project, because it will ultimately become the ideological constraint of a project that is closed in on itself. As we can see the voluntarism, the activism of men of action are able to release an incredible energy for

better and worse. The worst thing being that political idealism falls into the hands of "benefactors" of humanity who will stop at any violence to achieve their "higher cause. These "political messiahs" : Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, Mao, Hiro-Hito, Pol Pot, transformed the first fifty years of the twentieth century into totalitarian tragedy, totalitarianism is an evil of modernity.

"I have seen the great mass ideologies grow and spread before my eyes, fascism in Italy, National Socialism in Germany, Bolshevism in Russia and above all this plague of plagues, the nationalism which has poisoned the flower of our European culture. . I had to be the helpless and helpless witness of this unimaginable relapse of humanity into a state of barbarism that we had long believed forgotten, with its anti-humanism dogma consciously set up as a program of action. " (Zweig) " Their predilection for crime, for the satanic *outsider* , for the destruction of civilization is notorious. (...) The notion of avant-garde therefore took on an unfortunate meaning that its first supporters would never have imagined ". (Eizensberger quoted by Clair, The responsibility of the artist, p.18-19)

Changing the human implies for the artist the lifting of anxiety no longer by the contemplation of the work but by the practical construction of new materials capable of bringing new directions in life. Through its power of seduction, art aims to reveal a certain "truth" of the world in its historical context. But this duty of truth carries its dose of responsibility.

Besides, where does the modern artist get this impunity which removes him from being accountable to the community ? The artists of the XXth -century they worked in the sense of freedom ? On the contrary, are there not too many artists and philosophers who have committed themselves to the worst despots and made totalitarian barbarities sacred ? In the name of what would these citizen collaborators be kept apart from the judgment of others ? Why does the artist, this man or woman answer nothing to anyone? In the name of artistic freedom, you say ! Really ?

We are still swimming in the romantic illusion of "the artist rebellious to any cause, insolent, independent." "From the dawn of the XXth century, artists, writers and theorists of modernity have shown otherwise. As much in Paris and Rome, Berlin and Moscow, the avant-garde intelligentsia flirted with terror. The historical analysis of Jean Clair in *The responsibility of the artist* shows that "the avant-garde not only modeled itself on the political utopias of the extreme right as well as the extreme left, but that it provided them. also the main articles of faith. The post-war period was definitely the turning point when the avant-garde collapsed. The ideologies of the clean slate, the systematic break with tradition, the period of manifestos and slogans "to change life" to better "transform the world", the obligatory symbiosis between artistic revolution and ideological revolution, all this fell into ruin. The collapse of the great totalitarian utopias could only drag the collaborating vanguards into their fall. By dint of radicalization, we end up hitting the wall of the dead end.

The artist, the new Prometheus, thus ideally projected himself at the heart of

history as the initiator of modern culture and the political ideologies that stemmed from it. The beginning of the XXth century and its revolutionary promise of a new world commanded the arrival of a new religion centered on the aspirations of this new man. For artists, it was natural that art fulfills this eschatological function. But which art to choose? Thus there then took place an important conceptual “revolution” in which a clear distinction between image and symbol appears. The artist feels invested with a mission which goes beyond the simple illustration of reality, which will amount to nascent photography. From now on, he gives himself the privilege of interpreting it.

A whole new aesthetic process emphasizes the hidden meaning of images and the multiple metamorphoses of reality. This new conception of the role of art in society is essential for the understanding of contemporary art. On the one hand, so-called rational works of geometric or informal constructions will rub shoulders with a-rational works obeying only the impulses of instincts and the intuition of the imaginary. By offering us his own reading of socio-political realities and enigmas of interior life, the artist thus claims to construct “new realities” for a “new man” living in a “new city” and goes so far as to assert that his work “is an act of creation, in the almost divine sense of the word.” (Read Herbert, *The Philosophy of Modern Art*, p.16-21)

So much so that this new century was crossed by the same fratricidal struggles between artistic movements that religions experienced two millennia before, all artists were faced with the same dilemma : which art would become the official banner of the new empire? On what art, like Christianity, the religion chosen by the Roman Empire, will be based the building of the modern Promised Land. For here is the fundamental difference, Christianity was chosen by an empire not only existing but in a position of absolute domination. But such empire did not exist in the XXth century but represented the ideal state to be built; art thus became not only the art of propaganda but also the art of combat. The artist had to engage in political conflicts to the point of provoking the ruptures and upheavals necessary for the revolution and the domination of his artistic siblings.

All the artistic avant-gardes showed themselves in one way or another conciliatory towards the new despots, in the same way as those scientists, chemists, engineers who put their technical knowledge at the service of the Nazi ideology. If the artist tries to take control of the “revolution”, he is immediately excluded and condemned to convictions or exile. Yes the avant-garde in Russia and Germany was rejected, artists massacred, tortured, imprisoned but, after having served to build the ideology which will have destroyed them. This is what happens when the artist’s “ego” tries to compete with the bully’s “ego”. Should we

therefore exonerate them from having flirted with terror?

As much in Russia, in Germany, as in Italy, several artists, far from contesting, thus participated actively, at their beginning before being excluded from it, in the construction of totalitarian systems. It was the futuristic posters that made the propaganda of fascism, it was the architects of the Bauhaus who drew up the plans for the concentration camps and other construction sites and planning works of the Third Reich. For these artists and architects of the interior we can easily understand that they accepted, threatened with unemployment, to work for the new leaders. But what about the founder of the Bauhaus, Gropius, a refugee in the United States, who nevertheless decided to participate in 1933 and 1934 in the architectural competitions of the Reich, who collaborated in the design of propaganda exhibitions and freely decided to join the Goebbels Chamber of Culture. What about the Frenchman Le Corbusier, who without embarrassment made “offers of service” to Mussolini and Stalin? (Jean Clair, *The responsibility of the artist*, p.55-57)

The modern artist wanted to take on the role of prophet since the dismantling of divine authority by Nietzsche and monopolized the demiurgic mission of the salvation of man. Evil took him.

The Nimrod complex.



It is undeniable that the scenario of the “salvation” of the world was very roughed up from the beginning of the XX^E century. Man’s assertion of imperial power inevitably leads to his downfall. Gradually, the blurred outlines of the notion of the “fall” become clearer. It presents itself to man as an attempt to self-cure his anguish by self-deification. Indeed, Genesis (Gn 10 : 8-12) presents Nimrod as the first potentate whose dominant feature is a sickly claim to proclaim himself equal to God. This flight to the highest can only lead to the destruction of man (neurosis) and that of humanity. (chaos) To free oneself from God by posing oneself as absolute, is to seek to free oneself from the “wound of being” by revenge against life, even if it means destroying oneself. As if man could find the necessity and the justification of his existence only in the confrontation with the divine, as if his projection as absolute dominator was the only possible avenue which could allow him to support himself.

One of the fundamental errors of being is *hubris* , the excessiveness identical to that of the biblical Nimrod of which the mortal is guilty, who instead of listening to the voice of *Dikè* (justice) lets himself go to the violence of his desire. “The greatest evil is to do injustice” said Socrates.

The tragedy of Sophocles' Ajax, the Greek Nimrod is exemplary. Blinded by his desire for omnipotence, carried away by excess, Ajax believes himself to be independent of the gods and this enthusiasm leads him to unreason. But unlike the *Bible*, this desire for deity is not a sin but a tragedy of ignorance and stubbornness; it is not freedom which is bad but libertarian excessiveness in excess that Plato will call the "titanic nature" of man.

The paroxysm of this desire for power found an obvious political transcription in the totalitarian state. Conquests, destruction, plundering, the enslavement of populations find a plausible explanation here : the deity complex and by extension, the imperial and conquering perspective of world domination as a spiritual force. It should be noted from the outset that this deity complex is perceived first of all as an individual metaphysical revolt which subsequently induces a collective sublimation of universal domination.

The common denominator to all these drifts is the advent of the new man, from the golem to the cyborg where everyone, the priest, the imam, the rabbi, the despot, the scholar, the politician, the artist, wants to recreate a second time the man in his image. *Wanting to save men*, this is what teaches us a lot about good and evil. Indeed, the problem is that when *wanting to save men* serves to assert our own desire for the absolute, it mutates into evil.

"When the soul of the group, a god (scholar), a demigod (artist), a manager (company) or a philosopher (politician) proposes a marvelous purification project, it is in the name of the humanity that the obedient person participates in the crime against humanity. (...) The slightest doubt would shatter their dream of a refined society. Only a traitor can question such a beautiful project. "(Cyrulnik) (The words in brackets are ours)

By thus freeing captive forces which were often tumultuous, the anarchy-prone vanguard sank into a state of unease where the most troubled elements took command. Here again lurks the totalitarian drift inherent in any marginalized vision that wants to be soteriological by wanting to save humanity.

Through this deity complex, "the inhumanity of humanity", barbarism is actualized by the incessant and exaggerated use of the means of destruction available to the subject to fight his brother. As if through this neurosis man had lost the secret which allows man's humanity to be maintained. As if our anxiety to exist was that we have declared war on life itself. Today we are witnessing a race against time towards the deity of man, the most fundamental neurosis of man. This deity complex being the neurotic response of man alienated by theological-political dogmatism.

"So evil shows its true face. (...) It is because man is the target of totality, a desire for total accomplishment, that he throws himself into totalitarianisms which properly constitute the pathology of hope..."(Paul Ricoeur, *The conflict of interpretations*, p. 429)

The popes of the Inquisition, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Mao, Hiro-Hito, Bin Laden are all examples of absolutism. All of them provoked, by their will to be

Savior, obscene events of unheard-of violence, a "veritable fury of destruction", a "fanaticism of devastation" in which liberty annihilates itself. These psychopaths of the ultimate creation of the "neo-homo" are indeed madmen of the Absolute and each with their claim to save the whole of humanity used God, Allah or Yahweh as surety or alibi for their crimes.

"Wherever there are finite entities internal to the world - once the 'nation', the 'people', the 'race', even the 'Church, today the' working class ', the' party 'or' true conscience "of an intellectual elite - are erected as absolutes and held for final emancipation, there does not occur the true liberation of man but the totalitarian domination of man over man, and therefore new suspicions and new hatreds, new anguishes and new sufferings among individuals, groups, peoples, races and classes : not therefore a better society, nor justice for all, nor the freedom of the individual, nor the true love. (Hans Küng, *Does God Exist ?*, p. 565-566)

The will to power contaminates freedom with its desire for accomplishment because this aim for completion is the basis of the hope by which freedom sinks into radical evil as a work of totalization. The deity complex as an apology for the desire for power is the defeat of the mind.

"From the point of view of existential analysis, to claim 'to be like God' is to condemn oneself to neurosis. (...) Man will be seized more and more by fever: he must prove to himself his necessity, his equality with God, his certainty that "without him, nothing will go": He is overwhelmed then more and more burdens, duties, demands, output, multiplies fights and techniques, but thereby only increases his feelings of guilt, that multiplies the reproaches he addresses to himself, and all this only because in his disgust at being only a man, he pursues an absurd goal. »(Drewermann, 1996, volume II, p.10-11)

This desire for power turns against the human, life in general to the point where he begins to dream of another world, of another life. There then occurs an inversion of values where the instinct of life is supplanted by the instinct of death; hatred of existence mutates into hatred of freedom.

The seduction of disaster.

Devastated by two world wars, shaken by incessant conflicts that affect the entire planet, marked by the appearance of new weapons of mass destruction and the rise of unprecedented forms of totalitarian barbarism such as fascism, Nazism and Stalinism, the 20th century integrated deeply, and with gravity, the historical barbarism of Antiquity. Evil is omnipresent in human history : massive exterminations of peoples "doomed to the forbidden", search for domination and racial or ethnic purity, slavery of the masses, enslavement of women as spoils of war and sexual object, forced labor of women. children, learned barbarism of weapons of mass destruction and chemical manipulations which increase the risks of *humanicide* . The biblical Nimrod is there to remind us : the disproportionate pride of the self-deified man in search of absolute power is our radical evil.

“Is God just an initiative of human freedom, just like evil? As radical as evil elsewhere?” (Jorge Semprun, *Evil and modernity*)

Both theism and atheism stumble upon the efficiency of evil in the world. Having taken the place of God under the benevolent eye of the “Lights” of modernity, man found a rational intention, a will to power in accordance with the final goal of his existence. From the deity of man as the spiritual foundation of modernity to the demiurgic temptation, the step was easily taken: the deity complex (man-god, master of the world) would be to modernity what demiurgy (god, creator universe) was in ancient times. The deity complex thus presents itself as a desperate attempt to compensate oneself for the experience of his own nothingness (man is born only once and dies forever) with the inordinate pride of the demiurgic creation of a world. new. By wanting to be God, man discovered himself Nimrod.

“This is the perfect crime, perfect because the murderer and the victim are ultimately one and the same.” (Baudrillard)

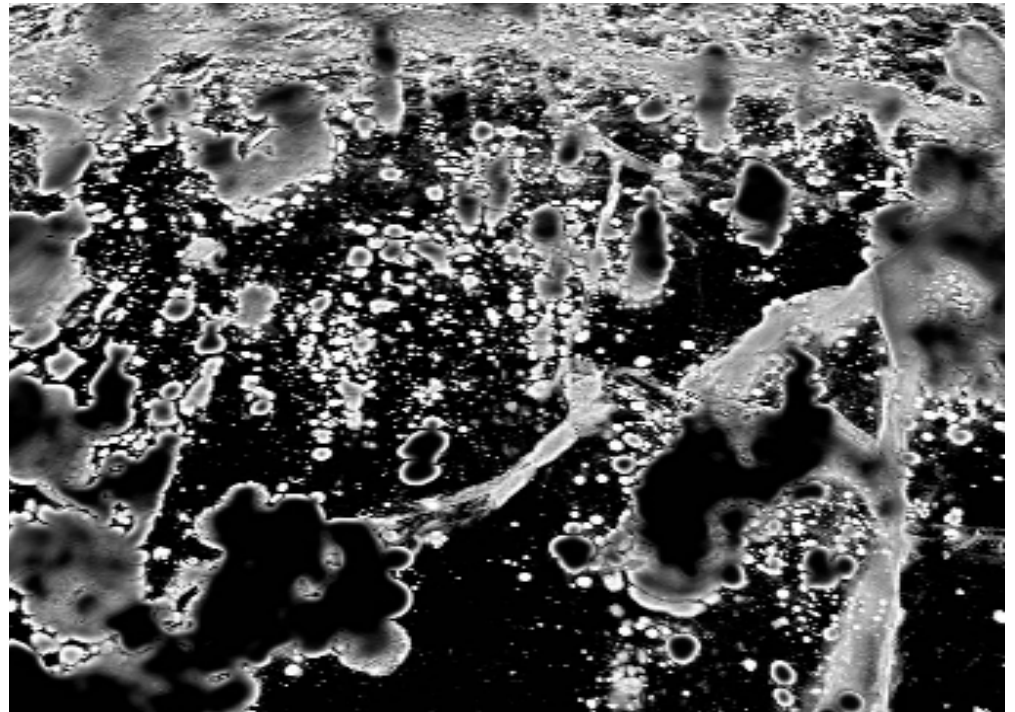
“Nowadays, and Nietzsche here again indicates the point of inflection from a distance, it is not so much the absence or death of God that is affirmed but the end of man; it is then discovered that the death of God and the last man are linked. (...) Since he killed God, it is he himself who must answer for his finitude; but since it is in the death of God that he speaks, thinks and exists, his murderer himself is doomed to die: new gods, the same, are already swelling the future Ocean; the man will disappear. More than the death of God - or rather in the wake of this death and according to a deep correlation with it, what Nietzsche’s thought announces is the end of his murderer. »(Michel Foucault, *Words and things*, pp. 396, 398)

The end of the apocalyptic world of theologies was relegated to an archaic superstition unworthy of modern thought, until the day ... when man, this fallen god, fell back to earth, when he was joined by the events of his own. tragedy. Now man can put an end to his history, to the history of humanity, the only and true end of “the eternal return.” “

The Apocalypses are all branded with anguish : “metaphysical anguish, anguish of neurotic origin, intimately linked and inseparable. Man seeks, through a disturbing darkness, to free himself from the heavy burden of his instinctual ambivalence. He tries, by expressing his anguish to flee from her, to tame her, but, undergoing his vertigo, tirelessly returning to the images that it arouses, he is fascinated by her. »(Gauffretau-Sévy, 1965)

Evil is always defined as a separation, the rupture of a harmony, either in the same being, or between all beings. Between a science which, in its frantic course, seems to ignore the human being, and a technology which worries and threatens it (nuclear, chemical weapons ...), it is understandable to see poetry taking hold as a symptom of social malaise of our time, it signifies that the unhappy man will have wanted and even created his unhappiness.

The Tyranny of Apocalyptic Dark



From the “funeral black” emerge the “wandering masses.” (Jean Éthier-Blais)

The 1950s were, for most of us, a happy and carefree time for countries freed from war. Yet these same years were the breeding ground for social conflicts of rare violence, mainly, the demands of the civil rights of black Americans against right-wing and far-right extremist groups such as the Klux Klux Klan. In addition to Stalin’s purges in the Soviet Union, there was the brutal suppression of the uprising in Hungary in 1956, scorned Germany was rebuilt, France and Italy were self-critical of their collaboration with Nazism.

In Asia, Japan has difficulty swallowing defeat and shame seizes the Japanese. The United States gets involved in the Korean War, the French suffer defeat in Indochina and Africa while the English are expelled from the Middle East mainly from Egypt with Nasser’s stranglehold on the Suez Canal. To the question of direct confrontation with historical events is superimposed that of the precariousness of the contemporary human condition in the face of the atomic bomb.

The 1950s and 1960s marked American supremacy. New York deprives Paris of its title of world capital of art, aided in this by the power of private collectors and national museums. The United States of America is henceforth the protector of a Europe in ruins and occupies a dominant and triumphant ideological position against the Russia of the Soviets. Van der Rohe’s skyscrapers become the symbol of American economic power and Wright’s buildings that of its cul-

tural domination. Manhattan style is invading the planet, mainly Japan to show who is the winner.

The idea is developing to make a clean sweep and start from scratch through the radical upheaval of the form, caught in an irreversible process of deconstruction and renewal where the journey inaugurated by the various avant-garde would be completed. Quietly, in a subtle way, the “post-modern” concept first emerges in the architectural vocabulary before characterizing all creations that deviate from the standards. European artists, having come down from their pedestals, several refugees in America, will see the birth before their eyes of an American art strangely inspired by the Russian avant-garde, from the abstract art of Kandinsky to the monochrome of Malevich and Rodchenko.

The post-war period revived expressionism, meaning alienation and evil once again took precedence over reason. It is not by chance that the main features of Expressionism - corrupt city, pollution, gangsters, whores, gigolos, ghettos, degenerate crooks, illegal immigrants - form the romantic framework of the noir novel, a very popular current of American literature. of the “fifties. “The great power of darkness” (Melville) reminds us of the presence of evil as a negative force that tries to rule the world through new forms of social violence and exclusion.

Originally figurative paintings European Expressionists of the early XXth century had the torments of life in bodies and faces equally tormented. With the American abstract expressionism of the 1950s gradually under the effect of the ambient nihilism, the human disappeared from the paintings to leave only more and more fleeting traces of his upset soul .

“In a world deprived of illusions and light, man feels a stranger, his exile is without remedy because he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or of the hope of a promised land. “ (Albert Camus)

The resurgence of black coincides with the arrival of existentialist doubt which completely destroys the vitality and passionate impetus that characterized the utopian avant-garde. The color black and its splashes became the chromatic translation of the psychic upheavals of the nuclear age confronted with the absurdity of existence as an “eruption of materialistic darkness into the sphere of communication between eternal light and a creature seeking interior illumination. “(Riedl)

Regardless of styles, black “ color “ was the favorite color of American art in the 1950s and used repeatedly. There are historical precedents. In 1930, for example, Man Ray offered a black photograph to Robert Desnos. In 1936, Rodtchenko’s *Black Square on Black Background* was reproduced in the catalog of the *Cubism and Abstract Art* exhibition , organized at MoMA by Alfred Barr; the *Black on White* Malevich there was also mentioned. As early as 1938, Hartung, the stateless German who had taken refuge in France, began to throw spurts of black paint on the canvas as a warning to us of the dark tragedy which would soon befall Europe. In February 1948, the first post-war exhibition of Matisse took place at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York. She was

showing many drawings in black ink that appeared to be done with a brush as large as a fist, in a slow motion. There was, then, the idea that the color black was the paint best representing the era of nuclear disarray. The use of black, its meteoric rise in art, a perfectly insignificant sign for the great systems of political interpretation other than marginalized anarchism, will on the contrary become a sign revealing the latent state of mind of the post-war generations. until our days.

“Enigmatic, hermetic, no one to deliver us, we live our life impoesy without knowing how to breathe it. “(Gilbert Langevin)

“Armed with their complex detector, psychiatrists could always look into our a-sociability. It was very strange that there were so many antisocials, so many paranoid people, that an epidemic of mental illness had suddenly descended on French youth. In this world where we had sought life, we had only found rubble. (...) Both of us strove to silence even the memories of our ancient hopes, to accept the ruins, to be happy in the ruins, to be ourselves ruins conscious and satisfied with themselves. »(Michel Mourre, *Despite the Blasphemy*, 1951)

But above all black, the color of mourning, really expresses the failure of humanist utopias which not only could not achieve their desire for liberation but could not prevent the slaughter not to mention the artists who wished and even participated, even to their defending body, to this carnage. The artists found themselves as guilty as the scientists who made the bomb. A form of disillusionment, of demobilization forced the artist to question the place of the creator in society .

The creative genius of the romantic era, the one who must save humanity, becomes part of madness, pain and destruction. From a moral point of view, it is a disaster. The values we believe in are being seriously questioned; international conventions, including human rights, are flouted, in particular because of the widespread use of torture, the atomic bomb, the bombardments of civilian targets, not to mention the discovery of concentration camps and Nazi extermination, which reveals to the whole world incredulous that it is quite possible to love poetry and eliminate 6 million innocent people.

Falling from his pedestal, the “romantic” artist returns to the rank and social role that have been assigned to him in society, whether he likes it or not. The minimal role of the romantic artist as an autonomous agent of social transformation confines him to his true dimension; art transforms the artist himself more than anything else; so much so that his illusion of wanting to change the world falls flat when we see that it is the world that has changed us more than the other way around. This is what Borduas felt, among others, when he understood that transforming the aesthetic experience of the visual arts into an all-encompassing reality capable of changing life was a “cry in the desert.” “

The works in black from the post-war period are intended to be a confession of crime and become the ultimate chromatic expression of the great saga of human vexations. It then becomes useless or futile to be heard. The form will be obscure, silent towards the public, the work becomes a monologue, the artist

expresses himself only for himself. This rupture between the artist and his audience gives his time its character of a broken, blinded world.

The atomic age, this horror supplement pulverized the human soul. The radical bankruptcy of humanism projected on the future of very dark drawings and this anguish felt by the artist was expressed in a destitution, an impoverishment of forms linked paradoxically to an ultimate, to an illusory will to live. As the bombs explode, the men implode. The hecatombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki interpose between man and the divine the Revelation of a total Evil.

The meaningless work gives meaning to its time, such is the paradox. Two major trends are thus emerging : the “color field”, painting of colored fields which gives primacy to color as the structure and subject of the painting, and “action painting”, a gesture of projecting paint on canvas.

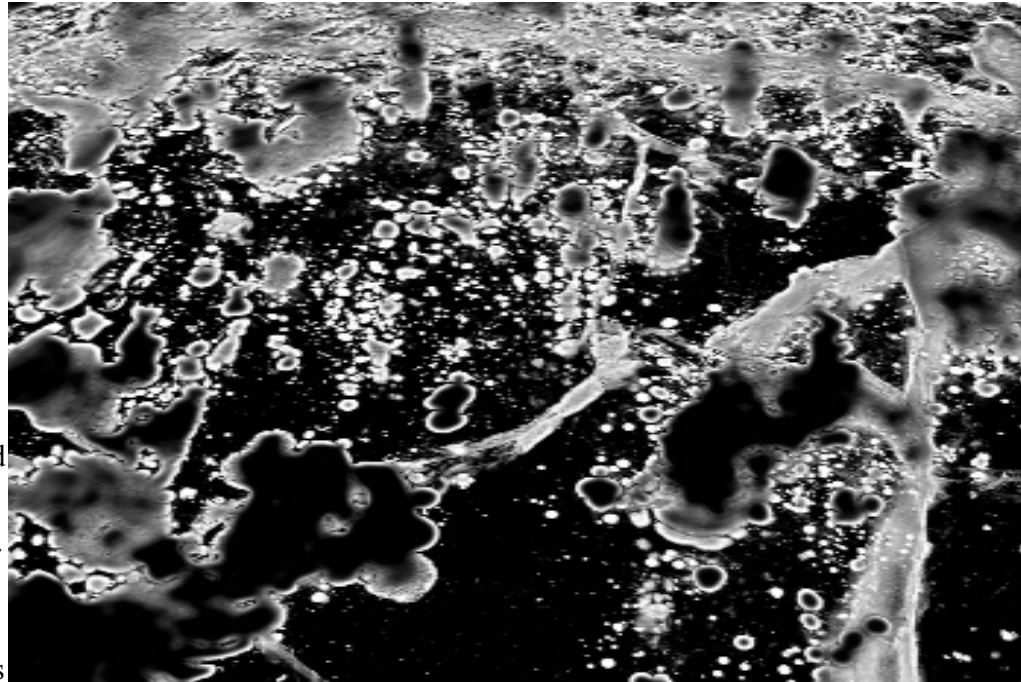
Indeed, many artists have drastically reduced the color gamut or removed almost all valuable contrasts as the “signs flew away.” “ The Russian philosopher Berdiaef wrote that this search for a pure form of a pointless world, is not unconnected with religious mysticism; This is also a very good description of abstract expressionism and the minimalist art of the 1950s.

Robert Motherwell and Frank Kline consider that only black and white can describe the “global metamorphoses of life and death. Ad Reinhardt “entered” in the dark as one enters religion. Others had a passage there, often determining: Newman, Still, De Kooning, Kline, Rothko, Pollock, Motherwell, Rauschenberg, Stella and Borduas. Art historian Irving Sandler described these black and white abstractions as evoking the “human condition as a dramatic conflict between opposing forces, which resolves into a precarious balance. “

De Kooning had been working on his black and white abstractions since 1946 and gradually moved towards near total black, whose work he exhibited in 1948. De Kooning’s black paintings were immediately associated with a crisis of existentialist despair, which the artist never denied. With a black and white palette, Franz Kline zebra his canvas of signs reminiscent of oriental calligraphy. This gestural art in white and art can be compared to the work of Pierre Soulages in France which will evolve from large black signs on a white background to black monochrome.

Continuing on the path traced by Rodtchenko at the beginning of the century,

Ad Reinhardt applies systematic, deep blacks to square canvases, “the last paintings that can be done.” “To the notion of monochrome is added” the monotony of a bourgeois society which is bored in the emerging suburbs to forget the catastrophe “remarks a critic. A man of great culture, attracted by Islam and the Orient, the artist’s ascetic approach is mainly spiritual based on a mystique of absence as evidenced by the series of *Ultimate Painting* , search for the last painting where materiality is reduced to the extreme. Monochrome represents a total break with the pictorial tradition dominated by drawing. One can consider the monochrome as an obligatory passage of the painting of the post-war years in search of a definition while the black “ color “ used seems to take on the tragic connotations of mourning and despair of the post-war world. .



Barnett Newman creates quite a shock by showing immense monochrome canvases crossed by vertical bands called “Zips”, reminding us of the intimate tears of being and of humanity. An assiduous reader of Jewish mystical texts and of the Kabbalah, he painted *Abraham* , a large vertical canvas, 210 x 88 cm, which appeared to be entirely black. Abraham, the spiritual father of the three largest monotheistic religions in the world, so-called religions of love and brotherhood, disappears in the shame of failure. The religion of Latin *re-ligare* , (completely connected to its world) therefore marks the social bond between men and women. When this link becomes war, torture and extermination, religion loses all legitimacy.

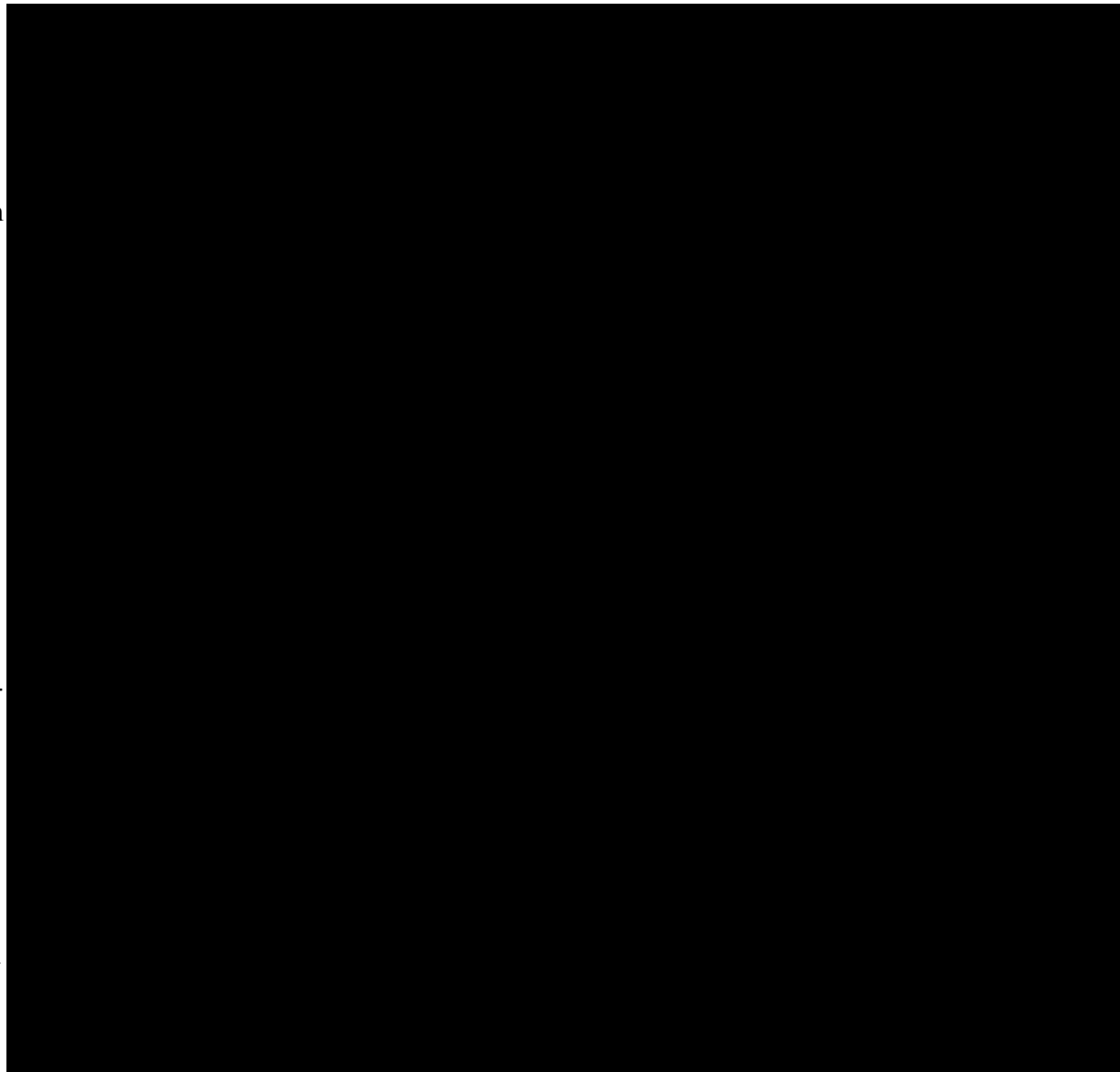
Jackson Pollock, meanwhile, began producing black and white paintings in 1947. He inaugurated the technique of “dripping”, inspired by the technique of drawing on sand of the Navaro Indians, by involving himself with his whole body in a gesture. like a ritual that lets the paint flow onto the canvas placed on the ground, thus creating a web of interwoven lines. From this technique, Allan Kaprow deduces that painting is outdated and that it is the gesture that is creative. An event is pure creation, he thus invented the happening in 1959. Conceptual art will go further by affirming the primacy of thought over the work.

Rothko works on large canvases in very dark colors, with tendencies of browns, grays and vaporous blacks. To obtain these impressions, he applied two or three passes of dark colors on a colored base. Singularly, he wanted his paintings not to be too violently lit during their exhibition, but on the contrary that they emerge from the half-light as “expression of the fundamental human emotions - tragedy, ecstasy, fate”, “evocation of mortality. “

After having produced a series of white paintings, Rauschenberg began to cover newspaper collages with a thick layer of black color: that of occultation. The *Black Painting* Rauschenberg are not pure monochrome, since behind the black, “so beyond the wall paint, face life, that big events like the most innocuous news items, without hierarchy. Rauschenberg uses black, in a covering movement. It is no longer a question of covering with color, as is often the custom, but of covering collages, and in particular, newspaper collages. The black paint used has a weight. Darkness weighs on civilization but hope remains possible. It would be enough for the dark veil to be torn for this living, daily or heroic, trivial or artistic topicality, to invade all space.

Frank Stella painted twenty-three “black paintings” between 1958 and 1960, which are subdivided into two groups, with a rectilinear or diamond structure. The first category consists of a linear network, parallel to the edges of the painting, while in the second, it is inscribed obliquely. The structures are repetitive, always using the same formal scheme but according to different orientations. Frank Stella titles his paintings in very characteristic ways with Nazi slogans or moments of catastrophe. Before being an explanation of the work, the titles reveal the symptoms of the painter’s state of mind during this period. The artist is confronted with the failure of art as a scene of liberation putting an end to the romantic idea of the revolutionary imagination in the service of humanity.

Painting in black and white bears the mark of fire and ash on charred objects or bodies, it is to introduce disappearance into the work. This does not mean the end of art, nor of the plastic arts for all that, nor does it justify any negationism of art, despite the iconoclastic gesture of Rauschenberg who decides to erase with the eraser a drawing given by De Kooning, but reflects the most unimaginable historical disappearance. Not only six million Jews (and



non-Jews, Gypsies, blacks, homosexuals) died, but with their bodies went up in smoke their name ; all traces and proof that they belonged to mankind have disappeared, as have those hundreds of thousands of Japanese whose bodies irradiated by the radioactive blast of the bomb disappeared from the face of the earth. Faced with Adorno’s assertion: “writing a poem after Auschwitz is an act

of barbarism”, an assertion that denies art any contemporaneity, artists have chosen to show the unrepresentable by creating “pure optical situations” (Deleuze) illustrating the experience of catastrophe (genocide) and disappearance (holocaust) confronting humans.

The minimalist black monochrome as mystic of absence also plays on another register : the kenosis of the body like the crucified body of Christ which empties itself of its substance . With black monochrome, it is the world which empties itself of its substance, which slips towards its disappearance that Reinhardt describes as “black evanescences.

“After Auschwitz and Hiroshima, we can only face a nihilistic kenosis :” the experience of fear is controlled by the frightening “said Brisson. (Michèle Katz and Jean-Louis Déotte , Art at the time of the disappearance)

Rauschenberg’s erasure tacitly demonstrated that modern art, mainly avant-garde, could not achieve the utopian solutions to the evils of

this world that it had once promised. Art does not disappear in disappearance, it is rather the sublime that is dislodged from it, replaced by the impotence of existence. The atomic bomb promises a dead nothingness devoid of all possible. The black atom is to the modern world what the black plague (the Great Destroyer) was in the Middle Ages.

No colors anymore I want them to turn black... It's not easy facing up when your whole world is black. (Paint it Black - Jagger / Richards)

The use of black pigment at the time of the greatest destruction shows the erasure of the traces of millions of disappeared who passed from life to death at the sole “good” of man in the German concentration camps, in the Soviet gulags, Latin American prisons, those in Eastern Europe and Red China. And hatred among humans is tenacious; contemporary disastrous manifestations are not lacking : Armenian genocide, massacre of Muslims by Christians in the former Yugoslavia, civil war between Hindu Tamils and Muslims, genocide in Cambodia, Rwanda and recently in Sudanese Darfur and Kenya. Each new genocide since 1945 grants a posthumous victory to Hitler.

“Hitler and Stalin are not images of the past. They were from the future. They are the original emblem of our present; From our era; that of the deconstruction of man. »(Philippe Forget, Gilles Polycarpe, The Mechanical Man)

Faced with the bankruptcy of humanity, minimal art liquidates the historicity of Western art by offering no escape, mainly monochrome whose surface “empty of meaning” prohibits “mental projections and dreamlike wanderings of the spectator in front of an abyss. (Chalumeau) No identification must appear, everything must disappear, forms, perspectives, symbolic imagery; “This painting makes sense because it creates a void...” (Pleynet) It denies everything that the concept of art has traditionally been able to contain, it is elaborated on the modality of absence, of pictorial stripping. The more we refuse, the more we mean: “less is more” and “more is less”. This explains the numerous negative statements of the minimalists and their asymptotic logic, always almost illogical like *Howls in favor of Sade* , the film which “destroys the cinema” prophesied the situationist Guy Debord. Indeed, the film did not contain any images. The entire film took place on a black screen during moments of silence and on a white screen during dialogue. Work which is situated in negation and not in nothingness. If it rejects, denies, abolishes, it is to affirm something else ... that humanity is capable of disappearing through the ordeal that it inflicts on itself.

Continuing the work of purifying the image towards abstraction begun by Delaunay, Kandinsky and Malevich, *arte povera* or “minimal art” favors simple and sober forms that imply destitution, poverty and the simplicity of means. This is how Germano Celant, one of the representatives of “poor art”, proposes “to impoverish signs in order to reduce them to their archetypal dimension. “

The void, the nothing, the invisible are part of works of art of which they constitute an essential dimension. Painting black becomes the stake of an asceticism and a sincerity absent from the diversity of colors. It is exploring the mysterious depth of the black hole in the cosmos, which absorbs light and can thereby become the inner revelation necessary for any resourcing. Black as an area of “pure possibility for a new beginning” was beautifully captured by Barnett Newman’s Stations of the Cross (1958-1966) series which ends in a dazzling, crisp white-on-white board, pure energy of dazzling light of illumination, a painting that is interpreted as an image of the possible transfiguration of the world.

“This is also the task that the artists decide to carry out, since for them it will also be a question of reconciling in their works the two contradictory outcomes of this new post-war consciousness: the existential attempt to say the absurdity of the world or the craggy ethics to find meaning in it. No doubt the situation of man in the XXth century, destitute, amputated the world, stamped his destiny, is it unprecedented in history. In this context, his relationship to art will radically change, as Hegel prophesied in 1812 in his aesthetics course: “In general, in the development of each people, there comes a time when art is no longer enough. »(Jean-Louis Andral, in Contemporary Art in France - All the plurals of the nothing and the singular , <http://www.adpf.asso.fr>)

In the 1950s, art was no longer enough to contain the floods of energy of a bruised and disillusioned youth. We are talking here about a generation that was twenty years old in the 1950s, that is to say, young soldiers during the Second Great War who became young adults during the Korean War, the first conflict aimed at analyzing the forces in presence in the Soviet Bloc and the Capitalist Bloc. Black jackets, beatniks and hippies were generational movements dedicated to liberating individualities by creating new social circles in order to constitute an entity that protects the individual against the state.

It is the first generation for whom the progress of science and technology has ceased to be synonymous with progress for humanity. The American soldiers force-fed in the trenches by the propaganda of the comics whose exploits of the superheroes guaranteed them the final victory returned to the country disillusioned. Alcoholism, violence, tortured mind, existential anguish transform the heroic soldier into a demobilized psychopath. The experience of the war was a generational trauma marked by a phenomenal increase in delinquency, marginality and criminality.

Black destiny of art.

“Despite the labels, since 1930, art, under all regimes, in all countries, has become confused with propaganda. “(Conio)

Representing the reality, the painter of the XIXth necessarily made an ideological choice. What reality represented ? That of the rich or the poor, the luxury of the bourgeoisie or the precariousness of the workers, portray the courtesan or the prostitute, paint a degraded industrial landscape or a bucolic country house ?

The painters of the vanguard in the XXth century wanted to free the art of reality and objects by creating an autonomous art. Kandinsky and Malevich were bold enough to see abstraction as an art form that could not be taken over by power. Informal art in its pure form can serve neither the Church nor the State, they believed. Perverse effect of history, it is precisely because abstract art represented absolute freedom that it was caught in the snares of propaganda.

From the end of the Second World War in 1945, the world plunged into the middle of the Cold War. Truman believed that art was not innocent but strongly permeated with politics. And this republican president , conservative and anti-

Communist, was just as strongly attached to traditional values in the field of the arts. In the 1950s, certain representatives such as the Republican deputy Georges Dondero, who symbolized the spearhead of an anti-communism that opened the doors of McCarthyism, made themselves the voice of a traditionalist America, declaring in great rhetorical effects:

Cubism aims to destroy by designed disorder.

Futurism aims to destroy by the machine myth. . . .

Dadaism aims to destroy by ridiculous.

Expressionism aims to destroy by aping the primitive and insane. . . .

Abstractionism aims to destroy by the creation of brainstorm.

Surrealism aims to destroy by the denial of reason.

(Menand Louis, American Art and the Cold war, The New Yorker Magazine, October 17, 2005, p.2)

Rhetorical effects which logically concluded that the modern artists of the various incriminated movements are used as propaganda tools by the Kremlin.

“The artists of the “isms” change their designations as often and as readily as the Communist front organizations. Léger and Duchamp are now in the United States to aid in the destruction of our standards and traditions. The former has been a contributor to the Communist cause in America; the latter is now fancied by the neurotics as a surrealist.” (Menand Louis, p.2)

Artists like Jackson Pollock, Motherwell or Rothko had, in the 1930s, had an artistic production and politically engaged positions, even for some revolutionaries. Pollock, for example, had experimented with the technique of propaganda fresco alongside the Mexican Siqueiros. The current of social realism, influenced by the Great Economic Depression, was the major protest movement in the 1930s and 1940s. This type of position could not be tolerated during the Cold War of the 1950s. But at the same time, the State Department wanted the world to know that the United States was not just a nation of cars, soda pop, and Hollywood stars. To achieve this, the State Department noticed that the supposedly revolutionary scope of Abstract Expressionism is insignificant since the subject of abstract art is totally abstract, not representing any visible and understandable socio-political content for the majority of people, citizens.

Due to strong internal opposition - members of Congress would never have voted this support for this abstract movement which was initially, under McCarthyism, accused of being *un-American*, non-American, the supreme insult in the USA. The federal government could not therefore publicly promote these artists abroad. But the government was faced with a necessity : culture and particularly the plastic arts represented a space of strong ideological struggle which the Russians and their Soviet realism did not fail to use. And, despite the aesthetic, but also social, disagreement that could exist between avant-garde artists and the American government, modern art represented for the latter an ideology of freedom. It was a question of giving “political” asylum to the art of the avant-garde disowned by the Stalinist regime. By acquiring the works of Kandinsky and Malevich, the MoMA (New York Museum of Modern Art) positioned America as a land of welcome and freedom. Thus the task was shared :

the FBI via the Commission of anti-American activities gave itself the mission of fighting pro-communist artists on American ground while the CIA secretly promoted the works of these same artists abroad to counter the strategy of “culture struggle” developed by the Kremlin.

“That abstract painting was an ideal propaganda tool. It was avant-garde, the product of an advanced civilization. In contrast to Soviet painting, it was neither representational nor didactic. It could be understood as pure painting — art absorbed by its own possibilities, experiments in color and form. Or it could be understood as pure expression — a “school” in which every artist had a unique signature. A Pollock looked nothing like a Rothko, which looked nothing like a Gorky or a Kline. Either way, Abstract Expressionism stood for autonomy: the autonomy of art, freed from its obligation to represent the world, or the freedom of the individual — just the principles that the United States was defending in the worldwide struggle.” (Menand Louis, p.3)

Yet there is no more American than the painter Jackson Pollock who is the embodiment of freedom and individualism. Born on a ranch in Wyoming, straight out of the Wild West, Pollock, who has never ridden a horse, entered the New York scene as a rude cowboy, swearing and drinking like a hole, exactly the stereotype sought by those who sought to promote a typically American painter coming to compete with European influence. This is why MoMA, one of the largest private museums in the United States, took charge of the promotion of Abstract Expressionism as an American art of international scope with followers like de Kooning, Rothko, Gorky, Kline, all from European immigration with a Yankee like Jackson Pollock as leader

The CIA turned to the private sector, namely the Museum of Modern Art in New York and its co-founder, Nelson Rockefeller, who viewed Abstract Expressionism and later pop art as the “painting of the free enterprise”, which would defend and promote the avant-garde as a model of American freedom. Indeed, in the United States most museums and art collections are “private.” So it was more interesting for American leaders to give support to these museums and private foundations, these museums and foundations already used to supporting Abstract Expressionism. The CIA and its allies at the New York City Museum of Modern Art have donated huge amounts of money to promote painting and abstract expressionist painters as an antidote to art forms with social content.

In his book *Who paid the piper ? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War (Who leads the dance ? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War)*, Frances Stonor Saunders shows precisely how the MoMA activities and particularly the organization of exhibitions abroad who showed the abstract expressionists, were organized by acolyte transfers from the various American administrations where Rockefeller had previously evolved.

“ William Burden had joined Rockefeller when he was Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. In 1947, he returned to MoMA and became president of the museum in 1956. Under Burden’s presidency, the exhibition policy was led by (René) d’Harnoncourt (...) who had emigrated to the United States in 1932 and

worked, during the war, in the artistic section of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs”, in this case Nelson Rockefeller. “After the war, Nelson recruited Harnoncourt for the museum, where he became director in 1949.”

William Paley, currently with the Congress Cigar Company, was also another museum trustee with close connections in the secret service community. Personal friend of Allen Dulles, Paley allowed CBS, the network he owned, to serve as a cover for CIA employees, through a similar arrangement to that authorized by Henri Luce in his Time-Life empire. Luce was also a director of MoMA and, as luck would have it, it was by making the central page of Time-Life that Pollock acquired international fame.

“So are names, so are links. For example, Joseph Verner Reed was a director of MoMA at the same time as a director of the Fairfield Foundation. Just like Gardner Cowles. Just like Julien Fleischmann. Just like Cass Canfield. Oveta Culp Hobby, one of the founding members of MoMA, served on the board of the Committee for Free Europe, and allowed the use of her family foundation to educate the CIA. (...) Before joining the CIA, Tom Braden had also worked for Nelson Rockefeller as executive secretary of the Museum of Modern Art between 1947 and 1949.” (Saunders)

The collaboration between the two organizations was done through a system in which the CIA funded private foundations, which in turn redistributed the money to institutions like MoMA, on the advice of CIA officials through “the Office.” of Policy Coordination. (OPC) The OPC created in June 1948 within the CIA coordinated all American clandestine and subversive actions. He financed the promotion of all kinds of artistic creations and cultural activities by organizing between 1950 and 1967 a series of “Congresses for Cultural Freedom.” “His task was to seduce the Western intelligentsias, long under the spell of Marxism and Communism, to make them gradually adopt a more accommodating attitude vis-à-vis American ways of acting.” (Saunders)

The CIA gave MoMA a list of artists to promote : Pollock, Gorky, Kline, de Kooning, Motherwell, mostly European exiles. We wanted to demonstrate that New York is the center of convergence of international modernism where dancers, sculptors, musicians, painters, actors of all national origins are gathered here to imagine their art in complete freedom. The fabulous system of foundations as smugglers was used to inject money into various cultural groups, festivals, symphony orchestras, literary journals and scholarly cultures. The CIA was bold enough to have its own foundation, the Fairfield Foundation, which “offered assistance to all organizations whose programs tended to strengthen the cultural ties that unite the nations of the free world.”

More than 170 foundations are known to have knowingly participated in the “cover up” of American cultural propaganda around the world with the avowed aim of “winning World War III without having to fight.” This third war, called “psychological warfare” by CIA agents, calls for the development of a system which justifies “a set of principles for the aspirations of man” and which embraces “all areas of human interest. man, from anthropology and artistic creation to sociology and scientific methodology. To do this, it was obvious that

some influential artists, writers, philosophers and scientists had to be convinced to engage in the ideological struggle while hiding it from the majority. (Saunders, p.135, 145,158))

Well-funded exhibitions were organized all over Europe ; art critics were mobilized, and art magazines subsidized by the CIA produced articles filled with insipid praise. In 1952, MoMA organized an international program for the worldwide dissemination of abstract expressionism. The MoMA had notably produced “19 exhibitions of contemporary American painting which were shown in a large circuit in Latin America. The international program of MoMA thus produced, in various capitals of the world (London, Sao Paulo, Paris), exhibitions of contemporary American art and, moreover, mainly of Abstract Expressionism. Then, “in order to support *the Young Painters* exhibition”, many donations were made to MoMA by the Fairfield Foundation, including \$2,000 given to its International Council in 1959 to provide modern art books to European readers. It was established from the records of the Fairfield Foundation that these funds came from the CIA. “(Saunders)

In the same way in 1960, opened, at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, an exhibition called *Antagonism*. In this exhibition we found, among others, Sam Francis, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Mark Tobey. This exhibition had been orchestrated by the CIA and presented in part in Vienna to counterbalance the festival of communist youth which took place the previous year. . This exhibition had cost the CIA \$15,365.00 but for its augmented version in Paris \$10,000.00 more were injected by the CIA via the Hoblitzelle Foundation according to Saunders’ investigation.

The MoMA, thus assuming a quasi official character, assumed, in fact, the American representation where the other nations were represented by government supports at the exhibitions. The most obvious example is the State Department’s refusal to take responsibility for the American pavilion during the Venice Biennials between 1954 and 1962. The management of this national pavilion was therefore entrusted to MoMA with CIA money. . . To do this, the New York Museum bought the American pavilion from the Venice Biennale which it managed between 1954 and 1962 to promote American artists, among whom the representatives of abstract expressionism figure prominently. This example is revealing: the federal government will hardly ever have managed the American pavilion of the most important exhibition of contemporary art in the world, ceding this responsibility to large museums, university galleries or large foundations. The MoMA, a private independent museum, therefore played a central role in the dissemination of modern art, thereby assuming a mission of general interest to the United States at a time when the American government could not do it itself in because of hostile congressmen . It is also above all the refusal to display any official art vis-à-vis the USSR and to guarantee American creators total freedom.

Culture was clearly instrumentalized here. But again, the technique is not new. The comprehensive approach, however, is quite similar to the good old practices of Soviet realism and its glorification of the Russian regime. The alliance between the CIA and museums and cultural foundations sought to give a clean

image of the United States as a model of freedom and to divert attention from the atrocities, crimes and other invasions that the country could commit abroad. including the Inquisition of McCarthyism against progressive elements within the country itself.

In the late 1960s, while the CIA and MoMA began to promote Pop art, for these paintings highly favorable to American symbols of capitalism. At the same time J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI launches the *Cointelpro* program , a secret project aimed at destroying all leftist movements as much personal emancipation (psychedelia, Orientalism, etc.) as social (pacifism, feminism, Afro-Americanism) grouped together under the name of New Left. (New Left)

The impoésie, rearguard of the XXI century ?

The recovery, the diversion of avant-garde art by the bureaucracy means the end of the capacity for rebellion proper to art. Not only does art no longer appear as a solution, but the artist's submission to the established order arouses both acceptance and indifference from the public. Acceptance of trinket-for-rich art and indifference to art "pissing in the bourgeois fireplace." "Technocracy has succeeded where all artistic avant-gardes have failed, it has succeeded in shaping the new man so hoped for at the start of the last century. We are mutants. And any change implies a devastating passage where the success or failure of the process is played out.

The art of canning.

The real winner of the art in the service of hegemonic ideology in the XXth century pop art as it announced the definitive victory of the positivist ideology of progress moving from Auguste Comte based on the technique and the triumph of the tandem productivism / consumption and enshrines the trademark and the "star system" as an icon of social consumerism and canonizes advertising as a new art of ideological propaganda no longer of the capitalism of Adam Smith but of the ultra liberalism of the "golden boys" of Wall Street. Is it any wonder that all the big names in pop art have worked in the advertising world : "Warhol was a renowned fashion designer, specializing in shoes, Rosenquist made a living painting billboards. Lichtenstein did design and was a window dresser, Oldenburg worked in illustration and magazine design. Finally, Wesselmann had studied caricature and comics. »(Lippart cited in Triumph of American art, T-II, note 15, p.208)

The universe of pop art is that of the advertising designer whom he consecrates as the true artist of our time. He is the only one to have understood that kitsch forms a system which adopts brilliant ideas and arranges forms in such a way as to create an art / desire of perpetual consumerism as the art of living of the middle class, its "recipe for happiness." Fashion will be the strategy of the publicist by which he creates generations of objects made to be copied in thousands of copies, originality diluted in the copy such is the theory of the gadget. Thus the serial image of Mona Lisa, Jackie Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe represents both the assembly line and the repetitiveness of the advertising slogan. In the Life magazine, we will go so far as to say that the pop charts are like IBM shares,

specifying that it is now or never to buy. (Sandler, Triumph of American Art, Volume II, p. 150)

Soviet realism was to communism what pop art is to capitalism, the imagological celebration of machinist technocracy and the political ideologies that underlie them. In derision, pop art was called "capitalist realism", which it actually was. From the new man we pass to the "homo oeconomicus" as the general model of modern existence.

"If mass communications harmoniously and often surreptitiously confuse art, politics, religion, philosophy and commerce, they nonetheless reduce these cultural domains to a common denominator : the market form. "(Herbert Marcuse, The One-Dimensional Man, p.90)

Because what surprises most is the speed with which pop art has established itself - in less than a year - on the international art market as if collectors, gallery owners, museum directors, curators of collections, the boards of directors of major cultural foundations, publishers of specialized magazines and art critics all at the same time grasped the historical significance of pop art. Many doubt it and rumors circulate about a possible collusion, including the art professional William Seitz who remarked very aptly when thinking of the instant success of pop art : "A demand for avant-garde art stronger than offer... it's just grotesque. Several spoke of a consensus of the nouveau riche towards an art which resembled them and thus infecting the art world of galleries with the virus of financial speculation. Seitz, curator and critic even wondered if the life of art was becoming an art / business so much the artist became dependent on speculation, promotion, sensationalism, advertising operations and insatiable appetite. mass-media eager for cutting-edge discoveries. (cited in Sandler, Triumph of American Art, Volume II)

Pop art is part of this aestheticism of diversion as implemented by the Dadaists and Cubists but in an opposite direction. By taking up the idea of Duchamp's "ready-made", Warhol replaces its parody by the glorification of the object of consumption as a political act. Because if the object, its logo and its advertising make their entry into the art world, it is also to celebrate the apology of the "American way of life" and of capitalism to which it adheres with fervor. In this sense, pop art has no esoteric pretension to be strictly materialist, a down-to-earth vision of the world observable through the mass media and mass culture in general. If "the medium is the message" then pop art illustrates it well because the whole contemporary environment, whether the headlines of the popular press, black and white television, close-ups in technicolor cinema, advertisements. Extravagant consumer goods, celebrity photographs in celebrity magazines, ball machines and jukeboxes in shabby bars with gaudy signs, it all forms the catch-all imagery of the sixties. The post-atomic existential anguish of the abstract painters of the 1950s is wiped off the map : "To hell with the bomb" said the painter Indiana. Pop art is therefore an unconditional acceptance of the American myth, a total approval without emotion or sentimentality of the current state of society with its rubbish, junk food, slot machines and shopping malls. This is why pop art is typically American and its promotion abroad typically imperialist.

Colorful capitalism



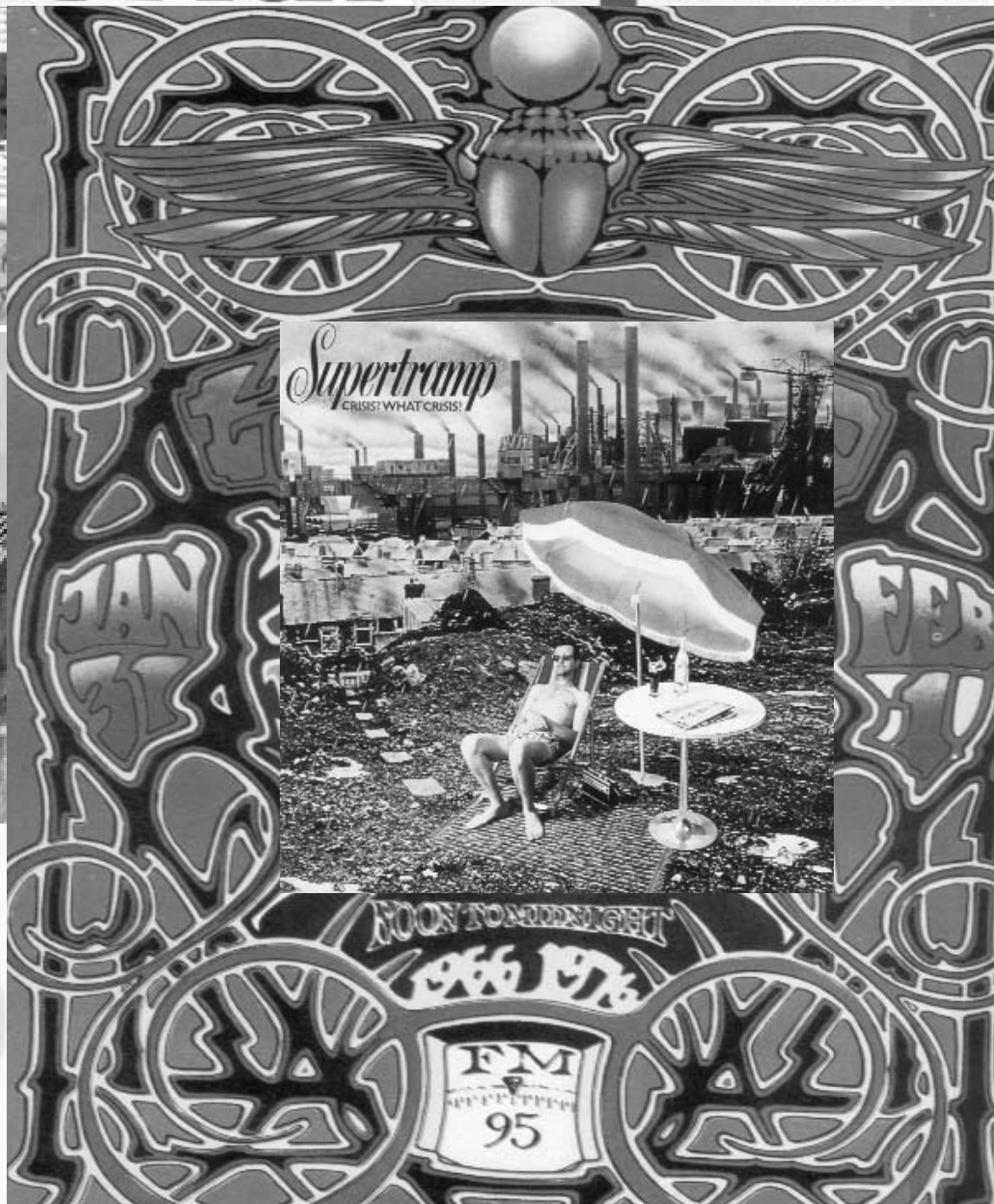
WESTCLOX Alarm Clocks
 Round clock has up/down control...
 Square clock has up/down control...
 Big size alarm clock has light...
 Round clock has light...
 Square clock has light...



Pearlman's Steel Pickups
 This pickup...
 This pickup...
 This pickup...
 This pickup...
 This pickup...



Decorative Clocks
 This clock...
 This clock...
 This clock...
 This clock...
 This clock...



WEAR A STAR AND BE A STAR



In front of a simple bottle of Coca-Cola painted in black and white on a canvas six feet high, Warhol's friend, the filmmaker Di Antonio laughed : "this is what we are, sodas, canned soups. , burgers, chips, hot dogs, ice cream cones. This cultural enhancement of the capitalist product, like the bottle of Coca-Cola, is accompanied by an advertising escalation of stereotypes. It is indeed political propaganda celebrating the total victory of the market. We will also talk about an art of sublimation where the images of advertising, the star system, political icons are removed from their precise universe to be transformed into hyper-images of civilizations. From cowboy John Wayne to rebel James Dean via Al Capone and Bonnie and Clyde, here is the cast of popular heroes alongside baseball players, pin-ups and even cosmonauts whose image obsessively multiplied like so many advertising slogans. sinks into the consciousness of consumers.

"We had the opportunity to change the world and preferred the shopping center." (Stephen King)

With Warhol, it is the end of the romantic artist always on the sidelines. Warhol is fully involved in the social game. Transvestites, homosexuals, drug addicts, brilliant psychopaths, all the Warholian underground of the *Factory* is found formalized by the media in need of stars. Warhol becomes a social figure just like Jackie Kennedy, he achieved what he wanted most : to be a brand as well known, in America at least, as Coca Cola. In this sense, Warhol is the consecration of the dandyism that Baudelaire described in these terms : "It is above all the ardent need to make an originality, contained within the external limits of propriety. It's a kind of self-worship ... "Warhol is a self-proclaimed artist whose direction is assumed by Warhol the narcissistic publicist.

But more than the product, it is also its mass production method which is celebrated by the work of the machine. From the start, Warhol "delivered the goods" with the series *Morte et désastre* and his works with evocative titles: *129 die in Jet* (1962), *Orange car accident* (1963), *White car in flame* (1963), *Catastrophe d 'an ambulance* (1964), *Catastrophe du Samedi* . (1964) The "pope of pop-art" wants to demonstrate that man will always be a source of catastrophe as long as he has not reached machinist perfection and his "industrial reincarnation. »(Vincent Lavoie, Technical burrs and other collateral surprises, Argument, vol 6, no1, p. 43)

Lichtenstein, on the other hand, celebrates print and comics as much as offset printing and letterpress reproduction techniques. The coke bottle is celebrated as a product and trademark as much as the bottling technique which celebrates the repetition and banality of the machinist movement. Marilyn Monroe is celebrated as a prefabricated icon by the media just like the star system itself. All models, from Marilyn to the laundry soap box, are treated like boxes of soup, merchandise. Because this is all American pop art: an immense advertising celebration (medium is the message) of star-objects, products, brands and machinist processes used by new technologies in the service of capitalism. The American dollar, Mickey Mouse, James Dean, Liz Taylor, Campbell's soup cans, Mao Zedong, the relish-mustard hot dog invest the art world and transform it "en masse" into consumable and disposable signs like so many objects and

images elevated to the rank of monuments of modernity. The gadget, the useless, the ephemeral, the banality as sacred values of everyday life likely to be erased at any time by the nuclear big bang, this is all the tragedy of consumerism that hides behind the sublimatory fiesta of pop art . It is "the shadow of the Great Machine" which transforms everything it touches into a great mechanical mess.

Ephemeral resistance.

Advertising is so invasive that it adapts, like thistle, to all possible surfaces; labels stick to products, posters take hold of walls, objects in shop windows, logos and brands in neon calligraphy light up the night, slogans invade radio waves, advertising spots, television and computer screens . Even the facades of houses cannot escape it.

The accumulation of businesses, corporate buildings, head offices, cinemas, theaters, nightclubs and cabarets, all with their illuminated signs, irreparably transforms the urban landscape by day and by night. Who says consumption, says waste, detritus. The New European Realism will be the answer, the counterpart to American pop art and will propose a "poetic recycling of urban, industrial and advertising reality." (Restany)

The New Realism went through two distinct periods: before and after 1960. The New Realism of the 1950s marked a break with abstraction and the classical avant-garde. The post-war era brings a new world filled with new forms of expression - posters, graffiti, comics, advertising - guaranteeing a new socio-economic reality called a society of mass consumption from which we must eradicate objects as fragments of reality. Like an ethnologist of contemporaneity, the artist is again interested in reality and its most ordinary components such as illuminated signs, shop windows, gadgets, "celebrity" magazines, cars and other everyday objects. current consumption. This collection of objects allied to the serial replica of mechanization will fuel the practice of collage and assembly techniques and their most diverse extensions as so many playful diversions. The banal object is placed at the heart of art and becomes the idol of pop art as we have seen.

After 1960, the new realism made an extraordinary turnaround to become truly critical of this frantic consumption of objects. A whole descriptive mode is set up: New Novel, New Cinematographic Wave, New Realism, all in reaction to the new analysis grids provided by the consumer society.

The 1960s and 1970s also saw the arrival in the world of work of a new class of salaried workers resulting from the boom of post-war university graduates. This class is unique in that it enters companies in important positions without having worked there before. Before 1960, it was not uncommon to see a simple machinist rising one by one through the ranks to become the boss of the company. This new class, called the management class, is unique in that it has no emotional or emotional connection with the company that hires it. For the manager, the company is a cold place where the harsh reality of the market is expressed by the ever increasing search for profit margins.

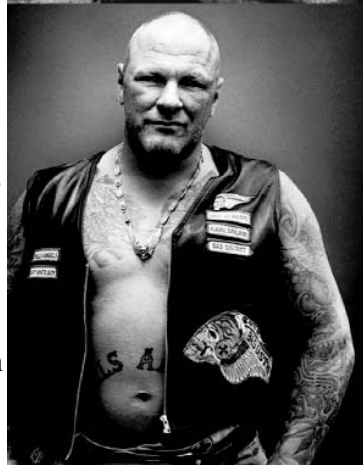
The effects of marketing and management are being felt more and more. Social classes and citizens are grouped there according to their income, their sex, their color in as many commercial niches, categories that must henceforth be targeted. Society is now sliced into socio-economic sausage to the detriment of the concept of citizenship. Everything becomes targeted, the artist Niki de Saint Phalle understood it well since she begins to target the paintings of her colleagues and destroy them with a gun, destroying at the same time the notion of a masterpiece replaced by junk for all adapted to our desires more than our needs.

Youth is no longer an age but an ideology expressed by Marcuse's famous slogan: "the imagination in power." The new management gurus couldn't pass up such an opportunity. In a few years, they transformed the "young" concept into a youth market offering huge profit possibilities: films, books, music, clothes and even young "stylish" cars: Corvette, Mustang, Camaro not to mention Harley Davidson and Triumph Commando.

Very quickly, the most marginal forms of expression came to feed the imagination of advertisers, mainly the colors, shapes, artefacts, slogans produced by countercultural rebellions which, once well recovered, will in turn set the standards. modern marketing.

The new post-1960 realism becomes more critical of pop art by confronting art with this new reality of consumerism in the same way as the romantics and idealists of the 19th century in direct contact with the social realities of the time. Waste, pollution, environmental problems become their favorite subjects. A whole generation of artists began to search rubbish dumps, flea markets, ironwork, construction sites, supermarket garbage bins in search of the new material par excellence of contemporary art: waste.

The new realism after 1960 is the art of anger expressed physically by the destruction of the gadgets of the consumer society: it is the "formal structure of objects destroyed in anger that determines the aesthetics of the 'work ... "(Arman) Pianos, double basses or Henri II furniture will be destroyed with a sledgehammer and the fragments exposed on panels prepared for this purpose. Upon destruction, the Accumulation period will follow, where large quantities of identical objects or rubbish will be melted into the plexiglass like the dumps; the most famous being Long Term Parking exhibited on the grounds of the Fondation Cartier, a work made up of sixty carcasses of cars stacked in a concrete matrix. The artist Raymond Hains, meanwhile, will extend the notion of



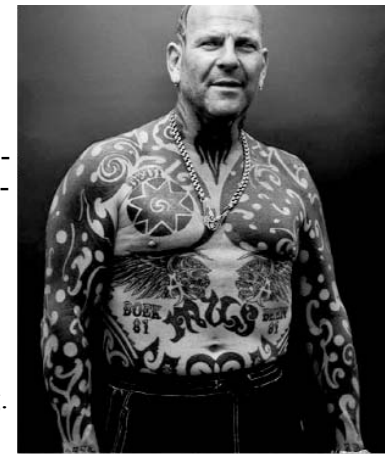
diverted object in the laceration of billboards and Christo, imitating the cashiers of supermarkets, begins to wrap life-size objects.

New aestheticism of expression of reality, compressed scrap, accumulated garbage, torn advertising posters, packaging of objects are all sociological discourse on our relationship to gadgets and other consumer objects and the shameless waste of resources. By giving us back these used objects, soiled that we threw away, the artist confronts us with life. These works, like exhibits, take stock of our civic acts of pollution and summon us to appear. The evidence is overwhelming.

This questioning of the American way of life is typical of emerging counter-cultural movements, mainly of the beat generation and the hippie movement. Kerouac, Burroughs and Ginsberg claim marginality, self-exclusion towards a society which is discovering the extent of the disasters of segregation, social injustice and the moral pain of hundreds of thousands of excluded.

An ideology of opposition without nuances to the established companies, settles but this time the dialogue is not sought. These rebels out of survival instinct kept a leaden silence, protected themselves in studded black leather jackets, and like heretical pilgrims roamed the roads of America. Since the city bears the seal of Cain, that of misfortune, you might as well flee it. Life is wandering, thus renewing the immemorial pact of the coureur des bois, then the cowboy, then the hobo, then the "celestial tramp" with freedom. And there are more and more of them on the road: black jazzmen, wandering artists, immigrant workers, unemployed, ex-prisoners or downright on the run, ruined peasants and others uprooted from the earth. These "refugees from civilization" (Parkes) expressed the dismay of the noble man, of the wounded soldier, of the honest worker who can no longer survive in a world dominated by the inhuman law of money, betrayed friendships and loves disappointed.

The black jackets, the "rockers", were recruited mainly from soldiers haunted by cruel memories and deep disillusion in the future of the man who returned from the second war, recruitment which is accentuated mainly after the Korean war. (It was the same for the Dadaists after the First World War). To the attraction for Eastern spirituality turned towards pacifism and the universal love of Beatnik artists and poets, they responded with occultism, the cult of Satan, Nordic paganism and the quasi-ritual apology of bloody scenes and depravity. thus marking its affiliation with the Germano-Celtic cults of Antiquity. But unlike them, the rocker of the 50s no longer expresses any wish, has no ideological mission, does not belong to any cause other than that of getting out of the



game and fleeing the mass reduced to the rank of ruminant animals. stuck in consumption. This post-atomic youth was walking along in a world where they no longer knew how to live. How to express human feelings in the face of an inhuman and even monstrous power?

Long before the appearance of the word beatnik, Norman Mailer, in his essay *Le Nègre blanc* (White Negro), called them hipsters, i.e. criminals, psychopaths, depraved people for whom violence, theft, debauchery constitute the only fashion. possible personal expression. In the shadow of the atomic apocalypse, the hipster expects nothing from society to determine what is right for him. They have known war and are now convinced that those in power have gone mad and that, under their aegis, society must inevitably destroy itself in suffering and absolute despair. The only way out is to dissociate yourself from mankind and become “invisible”. (Gerald Nicosia, *Memory Babe*, p.222)

They then began to live in poor neighborhoods or on the fringes of large cities on squatted vacant lots from which appear constructions more heterogeneous than each other. Little educated, they refuse to work like the anonymous beings of the factories, the office workers, the supermarket cashiers who vegetate in a routine supervised existence, obeying like machines to the orders of the management.

L'Équipée Sauvage (The Wild One), a cult film of the fifties, was released in the USA in 1953 and revealed to Puritan America the malefic potential of a misguided youth. The gang of Lee Marvin and Marlon Brando speeding on the small Californian roads forever marked the consciousness of the youngest and created the mythology of the biker on his Harley Davidson. James Dean in *The Fury of Living* (Rebel Without a Cause) will complete the holy savage trinity of black jackets.

The nihilism of the late 1950s, but also the desire to rediscover a nature devoid of cultural and social constraints, the wild, more aggressive inclination, illustrated by “Born to be wild”, associated with the taste for the occult and for the Satanism (Hells Angels, Satan’s Choice), will therefore result thereafter in a passage from “savage” to “savagery” embodied by the “heavy metal” of neo-fascist skinheads and the “grunge” of nihilist punks. The allusions to the phenomenon of post-WWII black jackets and that of the Dadaists following the carnage of WWI are adequate. The neo-Dadaism / nihilism of hipsters harbors the same rejection of culture. Quite a contrast with the pacifist movement, hallucinated, imbued with oriental mysticism which developed in parallel on the American campuses invaded by the petty bourgeois milieu which, for the first time, entered the university of which Ginsberg and Kerouac were part.

Kerouac had some against *Le nègre blanc* and other writings of Norman Mailer published in the *Village Voice* where he associated the juvenile delinquent hipster, barbaric and violent anti-hero with the beat generation. Kerouac energetically opposed Mailer’s description of hipsters and inevitably searched for a new word to express a very different reality experienced by these new cultivated marginalized people; it will be “beat” and in derision, a journalist inspired by the Russian sputnik, called these young rebels “beatniks” because

they were as “off the hook” as the first spacecraft to leave the earth. (*Memory Babe*, p.595) Now the primary meaning of “beat” as Kerouac hears it for the first time from the mouths of blacks in the South of the United States means “defeated”, “crushed.” Subsequently the allusions to religious beatitude and beat ie to the syncopated rhythm of be-bop will complete the panoply of influences. For Kerouac, the beat generation represented the quintessence of holiness for beings - angels - who suffered in a world whose degradation was only increasing. He hastened to reply to Mailer with articles in newspapers and magazines, that the beat children are not rogue hipsters but respectful beings like Saint Francis of Assisi and represent a fundamentally religious generation: “We were all angels, we all knew that we left disorder and absurdity behind us...” (“(Jack Kerouac, *On the road*, p.189 cited in Jean-Marie Rouss, *Jack Kerouac the celestial tramp*)

Suddenly life wants to get out of its gangue which prevented it from breathing. The arts as practiced in the industrialized West had themselves cut themselves off from the experience of everyday life, focused solely on producing a sclerosing aestheticism associated with the kitsch phenomenon. Beyond artistic production, “total art” (Kaprow) had to be reintegrated into the processes of daily life. To do this, the artist must observe, interpret and transcribe the facts, gestures and events to make works with life, in life. Life is dynamic. If we look closely, we see that the common denominator that unites hipsters and beatniks is called the urgency to live which is reflected in movement (Pollock’s splashes), speed (spontaneous prose by Kerouac), syncopated rhythm (Charlie Parker’s bebop). The art of chair rails is transformed into a participatory experience, both communion and communication. The art of the avant-garde must dissolve in life and translate into an experience that invites you to live, to take the road, to meet others, to rediscover your poetic sensitivity. Of course, the forces of inertia (family, religion, State) will try by all means to stem this flow of existential vitality. Those who resisted formed what has been called the counterculture.

Obviously another Renaissance is coming out of the great darkness. A new generation felt the “need to be told that the real fight is not the political fight but that it consists in putting an end to politics. Indeed, the bankruptcy of political ideologies has spread a huge tussle. - anti-intellectual tide, reason is put in the dock. Disregarded as superstitions, traditional religions like ideologies have the disadvantage of slowness.

From politics to poetry ... “Poetry, art, imagination, the creative spirit are life itself, the true revolutionary power capable of changing the world. (...) All n ‘ is that metaphor: there is only poetry “. (Norman Brown, *The Body of Love*)

This text by Brown has the air of “global rejection”. Migrating birds, beings hallucinated by mysticism migrating to America, once again find a fertile ground for the nesting and the blossoming of a saving neo-primitivism. Wanting to be non-compliant, they will be counter-cultural, such is the new “beat”

Inspired by Goethe and the German wandervogels, he himself specifies, Jack Le Canuk Kerouac, takes up the romantic tradition of infinite aspiration. After

writing about his pre-war youth, Jack will now set out to find contemporary America. It is on the railroad and asphalt roads that he hopes to find the “satori” where existential suffering is transformed into joy of living. The essence of America is in the conquest of the territory and not in the suburban sedentary lifestyle of the American way of life. He intimately hopes to participate in the collapse of the idle fantasies of the middle class of self-righteous people.

Like Balzac, Kérouac undertakes the study of urban American society, observing the “great city in the grip of evil”: gangsters, prostitutes, drug addicts, psychopaths, nothing and no one escaped his study. All the bars in Times Square presented themselves as so many sanctuaries where the initiation rituals of different Gnostic sects took place with mysterious powers that the average man cannot appreciate. More and more he realizes and describes the powerful neuroses that overwhelm the American people. For Jack, this realization shows him what existential darkness darkens the fate of millions of city dwellers who have lost the bearings of primitive values mainly kindness towards all living creatures.

The 1960s were more serene for the hippies than for the black jackets and marked the dazzling return of Dionysos and his liberating “happenings” imbued with eclectic music, fusional dances, amorous fraternities and peaceful solidarity. It is the Mediterranean invasion of America by Dionysus. As if by magic, the artist rediscovered the golden age of ancient Greece where the artist was the intermediary between man and the gods and felt invested with a mission, that of thwarting the disaster announced by the horrors and disasters of this century, to fight against the capacity of reason to destroy itself. (Ribon)

“Dionysos is a hymn to life, Associated with the plant world and plant life, its popular festivals follow the agricultural calendar. It celebrates the manifestation of life in all its forms: water, blood, sperm: vitality to be. But his cult is contested and his followers sometimes persecuted by classical theologians loyal to the gods of Olympus. Dionysus disturbs, because he calls into question a whole system of values, the orthodoxy of a religious experience based on the absolute. With Dionysus, we sang, we drank the blessed wine, we walked, we put on make-up and taunted the “trapped” by processions of giant phalluses where we disguised ourselves as animals. The women, dressed in furs fawns, heads crowned with ivy, girdled with snakes, leave the houses for the



mountains where we dance to the sounds of tympanums and flutes. We eat raw meat as before the discovery of fire, we gorge ourselves with blood in this celebrating the overcoming of the human condition not by the spontaneity of the acts like total deliverance of the famous moira, the destiny; men and women united in this dazzling deified orgy. Yes, Dionysos is indeed god of the theater and his disciples actors of their own lives. Euphoria and drunkenness anticipated the life of an orgasmic beyond. “Enough to make you want to die on the spot! (Eliade, History of beliefs and religious ideas I)

Art must reconnect with the sacred and this passage will take place thanks to the resurgence of timeless and archaic myths in modernity. Faced with the political and technical domination of totalitarianisms, artists once again consider resorting to the primitive based on spontaneity as a means of slashing rationalist Western culture.

“The primitive was an integrated man whose thought was centered on the universe as a whole. (...) Creator of myths, phantasies and symbols, he had everything of a true artist, all the objects he created were real works. He knew how to party ... it was a question of entering into ecstasy and rediscovering the paradisiacal state of the fabulous time of beginnings. “ (Maurice Demers and André Moreau, Québec Underground, t.III, p.88)

The neo-primitivism movement tried to take the references in the past from which it would be possible to build the future. Indeed, each era seeks to update what was previously known in its newly acquired cultural and technical specificity. Brut art (Dubuffet) freed from all conventions tried to reconnect with the freshness of children’s graffiti while Cobra art, a synthesis between surrealism, primitivism and abstraction, brought to light a primitive bestiary of Dadaist monsters and masks. This sympathy, not to say admiration for the tradition of the “barbarian” peoples of this land, the counter culture will be the breeding ground: Orientalism for the beatnik and shamanism for the hippie.

Artistically speaking, it is a question of metamorphosing the simple natural impulses of the being into artistic improvisations: the creative act must be spontaneous like breathing. Automatic writing à la Ginsberg and “cutt off” à la Burroughs, novel written in one stroke like *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, free jazz à la Charlie Parker, gestural painting without retouching à la Jackson Pollock, everything contributes to celebrate the “here and now” of our time on earth. Life is a “happening” and literature is the ideal medium of expression. The four gospels, the four founding texts of the counter-culture will be *Howl* by Allen Ginsberg, *On the road* by Jack Kerouac, *Le Festin nu* by William Burroughs and *Joyeuse Cosmologie* by Alan Watts or *The Doors of Perception* by Aldous Huxley, c ‘ is according to.

We then witness the blossoming of a mysticism of immanence which is inscribed in the horizontality of terrestrial life and no longer in the verticality of transcendence. An immanence therefore expressed through the ecstasy of the body, osmosis with nature, the cycle of life and death experienced on a daily basis; so many ways that lead to satori, to enlightenment here below. Psychedelic art is fundamentally neo-primitive downright Dionysian with the

colors of the rainbow thrown on the canvas by the painter / shaman.

The idea of the shaman artist will be a recurring theme in the art of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and will serve as a breeding ground for the entire Western counter-culture of the “beat generation” and the hippie movement. This will be the case later with the Hip Hop movement, a sort of poetic-musical exorcism akin to the practices of African griots against a backdrop of tom-tom and ecstatic dances.

“The art of the avant-gardes freed itself from it (from painting) to no longer distinguish between the reserved field of art but on the contrary to affirm, like Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), that art and life are one. Marked by a personal experience of “resurrection,” Beuys proposed a new perception of art as “reconciliation” and “therapeutic.” He saw himself as a shaman and became attached, during his achievements, to many elements of Christian symbolism, taken up by the anthroposophical tradition to which he adheres. Thus, in particular, the figure of Christ, capable of healing humanity because he suffered with it and for The Crucifixion (1962-63, Stuttgart) is meant to be, through pieces of wood tied in rope with two white bottles and a cross painted red on a piece of newspaper, resonating with the theme of Christ exposing his wounds in the eyes of all to save humanity. Similarly, in his “performances”, he takes your Christlike as the washing of the feet, thus affirming that the respect of the neighbor is one of the keys of the cure of the company.” (Isabelle Saint-Martin, Figures of the religious in contemporary art)

The hallucinated art and literature then sought to take the references in the past from which it would be possible to build the future. Art must reconnect with the sacred and this passage will take place thanks to the resurgence of timeless and archaic myths in modernity. Because only myths are capable of building the bridge between the particular and the universal. Only myths remain, hence their immortality. It is neither more nor less than “re-enchanting the world”.

“Greatness of myths. They persist as so many mental constructs fade away. They have a more lasting life than many historical events.” (André Masson, All the memory of the world)

This epic mysticism involves an implacable settling of scores against the trivialities and repulsive avarice of a society trivialized in the mercantile conformism of the “American way of life.” Faced with the inevitable and reactionary resistance of a certain intelligentsia mired in religions that it no longer even respects, the beatnik begins a spiritual parade, a counter-attack that comes from the East: Zen-Buddhism.

The zenist precepts that we discover, we think here of Psychotherapy in the East and the West by Alan Watts, correspond perfectly to the state of mind of the time and spread like wildfire in the first university campuses. , in the beatnik bands thereafter: spontaneous enlightenment belongs to the one who wants nothing and who enjoys everything. Zen word that Bob Dylan will translate as “When you got nothing, you got nothing to lose.”

It is undeniable that Zen Buddhism never took root in the West as a religion but turned out to be an important philosophy where young people found what they needed i.e. the spiritual amorality of hashish and the sexual fantasy of the Tantric Orient with the spicy scents of the Indian Kama Sutra to express their rebellion against a society that has violated human beings (it is said that the 20th century was the most barbaric century of humanity) and mechanized its environment in the name of progress.

Long before its social aspect, sexual liberation, originally (make no mistake, we’re still talking about the 1950s), was eminently spiritual as a natural ritual of personal ecstasy. The sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, pre-AIDS, was marked with the seal of hedonism, the Indian kama-sutra replacing Mao’s red book. Books like The Sexual Revolution by Wilhelm Reich were a resounding success. There was no doubt the world was going to change right now. Moreover, Reich went there with a most radical analysis when he affirmed that “sexual repression produces obedience and therefore inhibits revolt”. Making love, disinhibiting oneself, letting off steam became a revolutionary task in the struggle against political oppression. The conservative thinkers of the time, who cried out heresy, were right.

“From the Swabian heretics in the 13th century to the Ranters of the 17th century, the same point of view is constantly being expressed: for the subtle in spirit, sexual intercourse can in no way constitute a sin. (...) Some adepts attributed a transcendent, quasi-mystical value to the sexual act itself when it was performed by their fellows. The Homines intelligentiae called the act the delight of Paradise, and again acclivity (a term used to describe the ascent towards mystical ecstasy); and the “Friends by the Blood” of Thuringia considered it, in 1550, as a sacrament, the “Christerie” (...) As the Ranter Clarkson said: “As long as you have not fulfilled this so-called sin, you are not delivered from the power of sin.” (Cohn, The Fanatics of Revelation, 192)

The sexual energy repressed for generations if not centuries exploded with such suddenness that the shock wave quickly reached all social strata leaving speechless all retorts of reactionary religious and secular movements. Love, not only physical but revolutionary, will have an appointment with history until the appearance of AIDS in the 1980s, which was, for the conservatives, a true gift from heaven and marked the return of the obstacles to carnal love.

The underground beat and psychedelic gobbles up all that is experimental. Its absorption capacity is incredible; music, painting, poetry, dance, literature, comics, anything that expresses opposition to the system is avidly consumed. Counter culture is like LSD, a sign of recognition. This means that we know the ecstasy caused artificially by hashish, peyote, psilocybin, the famous magic mushroom, “the flesh of the gods”, which Carlos Castaneda consumed according to the instructions of his yaqui sorcerer.

It was a question of reconnecting once again with the immemorial practices of the archaic mystical visionaries and the use of “powders of dreams” to open the “doors of perception” but, this time, under the aegis of science. As early as 1900, William James, the founding father of American pragmatism and behav-

ioral psychology, focused his research on the non-intellectual powers he had discovered in his personal experiences with narcotics. He then enthusiastically declared in his study of *The Various Forms of Religious Experience*:

“... our normal consciousness, called rational consciousness, is only a particular form of consciousness, around which, separated from it by the thinnest veils, there are entirely different potential forms of consciousness (...) No view of the universe in its totality can be complete if it leaves aside these other forms of consciousness (...)”.

Fifty years later, Aldous Huxley and Alan Watts, inspired by this claim, undertook research which had considerable social influence. But these experiences were governed by a “code of conduct” well defined as the “set” that can be translated by the quality of the substance absorbed and the “setting” the quality of the environment where the combined experience takes place. in the presence of a competent guide. As an intellectual project of empirical research on different states of consciousness, such experiences were defended. But too many young people have unfortunately confused the mystical search for the expansion of consciousness with the frantic search for new pleasures, an attitude strongly denounced by Jack Kerouac who was no longer found in this hip generation. As Watts pointed out in *Joyeuse Cosmologie*: “In the strictest sense, drugs do not impart wisdom any more than the microscope does not impart knowledge. It all depends on what you want to do with it. It is a tool, a key that opens the doors of perception.”

“We have swapped the smell of Sunday incense for the bewitching scent of the pot”

As described in the underground newspaper *East Village Other*:

“a contingent” of witches, seers, prophets, magicians, mystics, saints, shamans, troubadours, poets, vagabonds and madmen “besieged the Pentagon to make the“ mystical revolution. ”Shamans long-haired whites undertook to sing incantations in order to exorcise the Pentagon of the bellicose spirits that inhabited it and ritualized dances coded with esoteric signs were to provide the cosmic vibrations liable to bring down the headquarters of the largest army of the world.”

They obviously did not succeed. But the images transmitted of this hippie ceremony by American television galvanized forever a generation in need of sense. Welcome to the hippie world of the 1960s.

Marx, Lenin, Mao, Krishna and Lao-Tseu had just given way to the visionary shamanism of the psychotropic revolution. Unlike the beatniks who are usually more individualistic, the hippies are communal and fond of crowd movements, mass demonstrations.

San Francisco becomes the city of hip hedonism; the University of Berkeley campus, the headquarters of counter culture and the Haight Ashbury district, its place of worship. The Oracle, the first hip newspaper, will be both the father

and the spiritual mother of the international underground press. Tom Wolf and Hunter S. Thompson will introduce a new style of journalism with the coverage of “acid test parties” with the musicians of the Grateful Dead for the first and investigative journalism for the second with his foray into the world of the Hell Angels.

The hippies rejected any idea of political movement, of hierarchical structure. It is much more a matter of updating a philosophy, a way of seeing the world diametrically opposed to the culture of Western domination, of material success to the detriment of sharing. Fond of spirituality, hippies love the cosmopolitanism and pacifism of “superstar Jesus” but hate churches and chapels of all denominations. Tolkien with his *Lord of the Rings*, Hesse with *The Steppe Wolf* which will give its name to the Canadian group *Steppenwolf*, Kesey with *Flight over a cuckoo’s nest* not to mention Philip K. Dick, the hallucinated science fiction writer, enthroned in the list of sanctified authors.

The music of the 1960s and 1970s will be to the hippie movement what literature was to the “beat generation”, its privileged medium of artistic expression very well supported by the graphic arts of record covers and posters of concerts and festivals forming the iconography of the “magical mystery tour”.

The “protest songs” of American folk rub shoulders with rock, blues, jazz and all of them present themselves as so many universally understood messages which give substance to the ideas of love, peace and mystical harmony of the druids of the counter culture. The music is electrified. Fuzz, wah-wah pedal, reverb, the technicians of the sound under the acid make feats of ingenuity to tinker and make accessible to the greatest number the “good vibrations” of the soul in order to counter the harmful distortions of those who are not in tune. Millennia of political, ideological and religious practices far from striving for social justice leave us a legacy of thermonuclear technocracy. The urgency is obvious and we no longer have time to wait for the messiah, the proletarian or capitalist Eden. It is no longer a question of saving the nation by warlike power or ideological glory, on the contrary, these destroy the nation, the world.

Thanks to the folk songs of Bob Dylan, of Joan Baez themselves inspired by the patriarchs Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, rock music had a rendezvous with the text. “The words mattered as much as the melody.” (Nick Cohn) But be careful, not just any words, not just any poetry. New, lit, inspired texts with hallucinatory words. “We want the world and we want it now” shouted the Doors and their plea echoed around the world.

To Asian Zen Buddhism and the guru of the Indies of the “beat generation” come to join the American Indian, the native of Australia and the Mexican sorcerers, all in perfect harmony with Mother Earth. Without forgetting the feminists who, as early as 1960, “forced” the Food and Drug Administration to approve the medical prescription of the birth control pill. Pacifism, cosmopolitanism, feminism and ecology are at the center of this revolution which we will call psychedelic, “which reveals the soul” according to Greek etymology. And of course, the beatnik and hippie artists themselves created the symbolism of the patent signs necessary for any revolutionary aesthetic of rupture.

Psychedelia and all the other youth movements thereafter cannot be understood without reference to religion. Western youth, mainly Christian, cannot ignore the education received. It is precisely this challenge to established doctrinal currents that gives hippies this look of “déjà vu” during the heretical movements of the Middle Ages. We can understand all these psychedelic, esoteric, mystical, feminist and other activism movements as so many attempts to reintegrate the values of the anima in a sclerotic society obeying only the values of the animus. As in the days of primitive Christianity, the hippies, like the Apostles, were missionaries of the theology of Bohemia and of cosmopolitan nomadism as the only way of life likely, atheist or not, to promote the advent of the “millennium” “promised and inject some love into a company controlled by the National Rifle Association, the powerful gun lobby. Like certain heretical sects of the Middle Ages for whom the New Testament Gospels were guarantees of social justice, a whole youth embraced the hippie movement with the same determination that Jesus had to acquire in order to exercise his apostolate ie with faith in a better believing humanity. may his sacrifice contribute to the Redemption of the world.

No longer a political revolution restricted to a community like that of Cuba, for example, but a universally “messianic” revolution in the sense of spiritual renewal where the divinely hallucinogenic “tongues of fire” will come to sanctify the poetic essence of each inhabitant of “ global village. “

Only an expansion of consciousness will save mankind. A new magic must come to open and vivify the spirit; everything is in place to accommodate the psychedelic experience of “the politics of ecstasy.” Presented as biblical words, *The Politics of Ecstasy* by Timothy Leary is the underground discourse of clandestinity, the only one capable of changing the course of history. LSD became the host of the new Eucharistic sacrament of the counter culture.

“The psychedelic experience is the way to hear the music of the great song of God ... LSD is the sacrament that will connect you with the ancient wisdom, two million years old, that is within you. .. LSD makes it possible to reach the next stage which is evolutionary eternity, the reincarnation of what we have always carried within us “. (*The Alchemists of the Spirit* presented by the BBC (1967)

However, the history of religions proves it to us: every spiritual movement knows its charlatans, its Judas. As early as 1958, Alan Watts, the great orientalist of the blissful generation, visionary without being a guru, warned his beatnik friends against the “false avant-garde intellectual in search of thrills, using the jargon of Zen and jazz to justify a detachment from society that would be a banal and cynical exploitation of others. “

Unscrupulous “dealers” trafficked in the products, “Sunday” chemists marketed amphetamines, tranquilizers, and stimulants. From “high and down” the hippies began to waver. Heroin overdoses increased. This spiritual renaissance of the post-Christian era, a mixture of Zen, love, LSD, especially hashish and marijuana, quickly turned into an anarchy of religiosity celebrating the Aquarian era and its exotic products; temple merchants roamed around.

Opposition to the Vietnam War is snowballing. The air of America becomes sulphurous. Tear gas is increasingly invading American campuses. Cassius Clay, the great black boxer, converts to Islam and becomes Muhammad Ali. The latter, by refusing military service, becomes the most publicized conscientious objector in the history of the United States, leading in his wake thousands of deserters, all races combined, many of whom took refuge in Canada. Benefiting from a Supreme Court lenient to them, the extradition requests to the USA were rejected.

**FREE MALCOM X
FREE ANGELA DAVIS
FREE JAZZ**



The protest grows and wins the black ghettos since the death of Malcom X, the leader of the African-American left.

Insurgency riots erupt in African American communities across the United States. Half a million conscripts, mostly blacks, are found in the jungles of Vietnam. They also converge by the hundreds of thousands on the steps of the Capitol in Washington to proclaim loud and clear and in full color their denunciation in good standing of the war in Vietnam. The more the protest grows, the more the music becomes radicalized. The soft folk of Dylan-style “protest songs” are replaced by strident Hendrix-like sounds like bombs falling on poor people crying out in dismay.

Claiming to be Malcom X, the Black Panthers adopt the strategy of armed self-defense to oppose black power to white power and become the army of the black population. As early as 1960, musicians like Mingus, Roach, Coleman, Hawkins decided to break away from the overly reassuring image of jazz that the white elite were trying to recover and founded the Newport Rebels counter-festival with a daring counter-programming that reaffirms that jazz “is first and foremost a music of rebellion, in the fight against all reactionary stereotypes and all forms of racial oppression, in direct resonance with the growing politicization of black movements”. (Jousse) That same year, Ornette Coleman recorded a completely improvised piece called *Free Jazz* and thus marked the great movement of re-appropriation of jazz by the black community. Free jazz is now involved in all demonstrations against the exploitation of blacks by white capitalists.

“Say it Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud” (James Brown)

Jazz literally explodes, raised by the incredible force of the revolt. With bassist Charles Mingus as prophet, a new generation of black musicians redefines jazz standards by introducing the racial tensions of American society; combat jazz was born.

Of all the black activists, other than the Black Panthers and Malcom X, the best known is undoubtedly Angela Davis. Philosophy professor at UCLA,

California, Angela Davis is arrested by order of Governor Reagan for complicity in terrorist acts. Support committees are forming all over the world. "Free Angela Davis." Her afro head with curly hair in a ball, wearing a black leather jacket, black pants and beret propelled her face to the headlines of the world media and became the female icon, the "black Madonna" of the revolution alongside Che Guevara. . In 1972, after thirteen weeks of trial, she was released and the court had to admit that all the evidence against her was fabricated.



An urban legend, not to say international since the world press publicized it with the summer 1967 title of "summer of love". Beautiful hogwash! In the spring, a first wave of incidents caused demonstrations and fires in a dozen large cities. The first major riot broke out in early July in Roxbury, a black neighborhood in Boston. Women without resources demonstrate at the Social Affairs office for better allowances. They shut themselves up with the employees in the building. The police want to dislodge them. A rumor is spreading that mothers have been brutalized. From everywhere came small groups ready to do battle with the police. A crowd gathers in front of the building forming a protective screen. The police charge with tear gas canisters. Almost immediately stones and glass bottles rained down on the police, who responded with batons in hand. The crowd dispersed into small groups, shop windows were

shattered, looting followed fires. Burn Baby Burn sings the insurgents and will become the real slogan of the summer of 1967.

On July 12, police in Newark, a town described as "a training camp for the poor," arrested a taxi driver for a red light. Tone up. It's hot. A group forms attending the scene. Concerned police officers try to disperse the crowd. Blows are exchanged. A rumor is spreading like lightning that the police have beaten a taxi driver to death. Following the lightning, the thunderclap, the looting begins in this city where two hundred thousand blacks live. The situation degenerated to the point that 1,500 police officers were sent in as reinforcements but were unable to regain control. In the morning, three thousand men of the National Guard land, the fighting will last five days. Official balance sheet : twenty-seven dead, hundreds of injured, thousands of arrests and ten million dollars in material damage, not to mention the insurance premiums that had to be paid.

A week later, Detroit ignites following a police raid on a nightclub frequented by blacks. And so on. This famous Summer of Love decreed by the American press will have seen riots erupted in more than one hundred cities, spread over thirty-two states, making, according to official reports, a hundred dead, five thousand wounded, twelve thousand arrests, a hundred million in damage.

Desolation takes hold of America. In the district of Haight-Ashbury of San-Francisco, high place of the American counter culture, a funeral ceremony is held where is declared "the death of the Hippie". A few months later Che Guevara died under the bullets of the Bolivian army. The 1967 summer of Love ended with a first-class funeral of the hopes of an entire generation.

The torch of radical protest gained ground within the country. The declared death of the hippie movement in 1967 was followed by the riots at the Democratic Chicago convention in August 1968, leaving more than six hundred injured. This event must be put in context. A few months earlier, in January 68, Robert Kennedy, brother of the assassinated president, distanced himself from President Johnson and presented himself as the candidate for peace. He rallies most of the young protesters of the New Left. His assassination in June 1968, just two months before the Democratic Convention, stunned America and its righteous democracy. The anger of the politicized leaders of the counter culture is manifest: Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin launch their war rallying cry on the eve of the Democratic convention: "We will burn Chicago to the ground"

"Murder is the great American substitute for social revolt." (Walter Dean Burnham)

This assassination comes at the same time that the United States launched the Tet offensive in Vietnam. A bitter failure, the coffins returned home by the thousands. Clothing taken up by Chinese and Russian propaganda, this American collapse gives the frail Viêtcong the appearance of a David against Goliath. Abroad, the television impact of a noble and small nation besieged by the Yankee ogre resonates like a call for cultural dissent around the world. London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Mexico City, Sydney, the conflict is transported to all the major international capitals and will culminate in Paris, in May 1968. In

Quebec, the first bombs of the FLQ began to explode for some time.

May 68 could not have taken place in any other place in the world. Such an event did not happen like a hair in the soup. An event of such magnitude, despite the present socio-economic hazards which have helped it, can only be conceived and above all be done by minds prepared for a long time. May 68, it is the commune of Paris of the twentieth century; it is the spirit of the romantic revolt against mechanical alienation which has been in progress since the 18th century, which is taking action. It's a time to worship or curse, it depends. Nevertheless, May 68 like the town made history.

Everyone agrees today on one point, the events of May 68, despite their incredible character due to a particular socio-economic situation where exploited social classes and protesting students had a meeting, marked the historic arrival of youth as political force on a planetary scale. Against a backdrop of protest against American imperialism in Vietnam, artists, workers, right and left activists, students, all went there with their demands: increased salaries, better working conditions, increased accessibility to university for some, revolt of journalists against censorship of press groups, more philosophical denunciation of materialism and consumer society.

A government completely taken by surprise and imbued with its "infallible" technocratic culture has not at all realized that by confronting the demonstrators in "hand to hand", the police have transformed the Latin Quarter into battlefields where barricades, revolutionary songs rose up like so many promises of liberation. In the night from Friday to Saturday, from May 7 to 8, everything changes. The dreaded junction of labor unions with the student movement took place. In the morning, the French media show France, hitherto painstakingly, the incredible spectacle of a Latin quarter transformed into a mess of charred cars, smashed windows, streets entirely stripped of their cobblestones with columns of smoke here and there, which with the remaining pleasures of tear gas give the atmosphere a new air. (Patrick Champagne in *Le Siècle rebelle*)

Artistically speaking, from the May 68 atmosphere emerges the idea of ritual much more than that of revolution. Any ethnologist will tell you, societies need outlet rites like carnivals where the powerful allow the dominated to have fun at their expense. Disorder is always followed by a call to order.

It is obvious that May 68 was the biggest, the most immense, the most fabulous, the most unimaginable happening that the planet has known. After May 68 was marked by the tremendous recovery of the ideas of the romantic "left" by the capitalist "right" which soon transformed the artistic, clothing and musical tastes of the time as so many festive products to be consumed.

In 1969, the racist murder of a black activist by the Hell's Angels during the Rolling Stone concert at the Altamont rock festival sounded the final death knell for the hippie movement. The same year Jack Kerouac died and his burial went almost unnoticed. Only a few friends will attend. The death of this young activist combined with that of Kerouac in 1969 are more tragic than one might think. It is all the romantic idealism of several generations of young blacks as

well as young whites that passes away. Novalis Hölderlin, Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Breton, Borduas, all join Kerouac in his coffin

The hippie movement, like the beatniks, like the Black Panthers, like May 68 will remain the movement of an active and determined minority whose dream will switch, if not into oblivion, in the depoliticized revolutionary mythology of the Woodstock festival and recovered by advertising and fashionable T-shirts for teens looking for identity.

Another place, other customs.

In Quebec, undeniably, the national question keeps all revolutionary options open. The global refusal (1948) and the famous Forum riot (1955) in reaction to the decision of the national hockey league to ban Maurice Richard from playoff games for the Stanley Cup, represent the two founding acts of modern Quebec and its revolution. quiet.

When in 1965, the painter Serge Lemoyne decided to appropriate everyday objects, beer bottles, labels, card game, advertising images, of course, the Montreal Canadiens hockey jersey became the emblematic figure of the avant-garde of the sixties because of the political symbol which it represented since Maurice Richard.

When on May 22, 1968, a young singer, Robert Charlebois accompanied by Louise Forestier, Yvon Deschamps and the Nouveau Jazz libre du Québec quartet, appeared on stage wearing the famous hockey sweater, the "sainte flanelle", having transcended sport, the avant-garde of visual arts and popular music, will become a political icon of modern Quebec and will achieve the status of collective myth of "homo quebecus." With the Osstidcho "a total and musical madness", underground music confirms that in the years 1960-1970, any event has a revolutionary scope. Who remembers today that the "P'tit Québec", before being a brand of cheese and recovered "by the English", served as the name for the egalitarian farm project of the Free Jazz of Quebec which wanted to set up in the Eastern Townships a community center for cultural and social activities: the "Petit Québec Libre".

"The artist is a dog without a collar." (Robert Roussil)

The national demand has always carried the torch of revolutionary hopes, the leitmotif of which, among others, as claimed by the journal *Parti pris*, advocates nothing less than "the creation of the Quebec man."

"Our company only takes on its meaning if it is inscribed as a line of force in the revolutionary movement which aims for the liberation of Quebec by means of political independence, socialism, secularism. We give ourselves the precise task of developing a critique that demystifies the ideologies and alienating structures of our society; to lay the foundations of a revolutionary thought which presides over the establishment of conditions of existence more favorable to the development of the Quebecois man." (Bias, issue 4, January 1964)

This great social project aims at nothing less than the organization of the avant-garde in order to create the revolutionary party, the MLP (Popular Liberation Movement), instrument of the seizure of power. To do this, the artist helped to set up a string of liberating experiments.

In the theater, the Grand Circus Ordinary gave itself the mission of combining the concept of the happening with collective creation and the fusion of genres combining burlesque, pantomime, vaudeville, historical text, fair numbers, musical sequences, monologues, all given carnival festive tunes in an atmosphere of tragicomedy to the glory of the “little people of Kébec.” Subsequently, the theater Euh and Parminou moved towards a more marked politicization of social satire while adopting a more interventionist and participative scenography, ancestor of the National League of Improvisation.

In the visual arts, the TI-POP movement, a very Quebec parody of American Pop-Art, reminds us that the best way to liquidate the past is to once again appropriate the symbols of popular culture and divert them to the benefit of the nascent avant-garde.

“Le Ti is Quebec like“ Chez Ti-Jean Snack Bar ”,“ Ti-Lou Antiques ”, or quite simply Allô-ti-cul. (...) Both nostalgia and sarcasm, irony and happiness, reunion and rupture. (...) TI-POP, it is this approach which consists in assuming a certain national past but in assuming it as a past precisely, that is to say in posing it at the same time as outdated. ” (Pierre Maheu, Bias vol 4, no 1)

TI-POP therefore offers collective delirium around the symbols of our national alienation, our sexual taboos; the sublimation of our quétaineries: a bloody Sacré-Coeur in cardboard, an electoral poster of Duplessis, a song of the soldier Lebrun, the medals of the good Sainte-Anne, the p’tits pains blessed of Sainte-Geneviève, a daring photo Alys Robi, the dirty “jokes” of Ti-Gus and Ti-Mousse, a ti-rosary with that as a penance.

Once the past is accepted, let’s make way for the future. The Montreal World’s Fair in 1967 played an immense role in the education and appropriation by Quebec society of major international issues, new technologies, but also became aware of major world conflicts, coups d’état, movements of national liberation. A typically American art form invades Quebec; the poster, the “poster”. It was in August 1967 that the first poster shop opened in Montreal on rue Bleury. Called the “Unkown Purple”, the “English” boutique quickly became French when Anglo-Saxon owners realized that 80% of the clientele was French-speaking. The poster in Quebec will experience an unprecedented boom. The poster allows a generation from the “great darkness” to be able to finally “display” its revolutionary, political and cultural convictions through the consumption of images that are at once decorative, engaged and democratically accessible, accessible to all budgets. . Bonnie & Clyde, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, René Lévesque, Mao, Castro and especially Che Guevara, the best-selling effigy, now line the walls of thatched cottages and replace the old-fashioned icons of the haloed holy virgins.

“This need to define oneself politically for a young Quebecer is a new fact, born

of the current political situation, and a reaction to the almost absolute refusal of previous generations to take a stand. It is also obvious that, for a bunch of young bourgeois with political conscience scuffed by the events in Vietnam or by the situation of the peasants and workers of Latin America, the fact of hanging up at home a poster of Ho Chi Minh or Che Guevara constitutes a certificate of good conscience. ” (Jacques Larue-Langlois, Perspectives, no 21, May 1968, p.14)

The new techniques of mass culture associated with popular art favored the emergence of more playful and democratic artistic practices. Expo 67 was in this sense a real laboratory where the most “preposterous” ideas boiled. The appearance of the Fusion des Arts group’s yellow submarine at the Youth Pavilion sparked an unforeseen scandal when four outraged nuns began to ransack, on the day of its official launch, the first atomic submarine of the United States Strike Force. Quebec. The nuns had not noticed that the Quebec atomic submarine, which represents “according to several experts in the field, a spectacular innovation in the field of the potential naval air forces of the State of Quebec”, was exhibited in the frame of Comedy Week.

Drawing, engraving, photocopying (copy-art) are all practices that promote citizens’ accessibility to mediums and vice versa the appropriation of the work by citizens. A new urban and technological culture is set in motion while being contested.

It is no longer a question of discussing popular accessibility to the arts, but of reflecting on the function of the artist and art in society, on the values that art conveys. The first occupation of the École des beaux-arts de Montréal was followed by “Operation Déclit”: the occupation of the Museum of Contemporary Art to underline the disavowal of artists from Quebec cultural policy.

“Our Quebec Guevara is Borduas” (Claude Paradis)

In Quebec, the question of the status of the artist is closely linked to demands for national affirmation. Operation Déclit, in fact the occupation by artists of the Museum of Contemporary Art, asks the government to review its entire cultural policy. According to a leaflet from “Operation Déclit”, nearly twenty years later she claimed “the topicality of the *Refus Global* de Borduas.” The inertia of governments in matters of culture, but above all the lack of mutual aid between artists too busy “treating each other savagely, brutally, meanly” made the event fail. Despite this pavement in the pool of well-meaning artists, the operation nevertheless enabled some of them to examine their conscience concerning their role and the social responsibility of “creators.” In the Operation Déclit report, it is therefore suggested:

“As a full citizen, he (the artist) must become more politicized, get involved socially and politically by studying and understanding the workings of the current political system, so as not to be absorbed and taken over by ideologies bourgeois who reign in stagnation, dogmatism, academicism and snobbery. “ (...) The commitment of the creator in a concrete social action must be done, at the level of each individual by the realization of quality works which challenge

the established structures' and the obsolete conceptions of art and, at the level of a community of creators, through active participation and activism in movements and demonstrations that challenge the current political system." (Quebec Underground, p.363)

The artist becomes more integrated into his society and shares the same destiny with his fellow citizens. While pursuing a personal creative process, the artist nevertheless allows himself to participate in community life and does not hesitate to show solidarity. Spontaneous shows, such as *Le Taxichaud* in 1968 where 16 artists contribute to a benefit show for the benefit of striking taxi drivers, are increasingly part of Quebec's cultural landscape. We then feel a new direction which strongly calls out to art and politics.

Opposition to the Vietnam War, the rise of Quebec nationalism, artists, like members of the FLQ, proclaim themselves to be "cultural terrorists". Inspired by Isidore Isou's Lettrists and Guy Debord's Situationists, Operation Déclis artists want to "perform artistic gestures" perceived "as bombs."

"Utopia is... where the FLQ guys conspire. and the flower children " (Mainmise)

On December 8, 1968, the day of the Immaculate Conception, an initiation ceremony for new officers of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem took place at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Montreal. Considering that "the Knights of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher are the confirmation of the collusion of the three powers: political power, economic power and religious power", this ceremony represented the ideal setting for the type of "terrorist" intervention. »Recommended by the group. Interrupting the investiture ceremony, 4 men and three women walk towards the choir of the cathedral and there, in front of the dismayed audience, loudly proclaim their manifesto *Place à l'orgasm*. Here is a report of the event by the local press as reported by Montreal-Matin on December 9:

"Several bishops and the Archbishop of Montreal, Mgr Paul Grégoire, witnessed the scene. The seven "young people", 3 women and 4 men dressed in "work clothes", crossed the Holy Table, under the astonished eyes of the two

thousand people who occupied the church. Once they reached the choir, they chanted to the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher: "Whitewashed tombs! Death to extreme unction! Death to the commandments! Death to black vultures. Death to the cops of the spirit!" Death to the Young Old Men! Make way for Instinct! Make way for anger! Make way for Erection! Make way for Orgasm! "

Jean-Claude Germain, playwright and columnist, goes there with his dithyrambic blessing qualifying the event as "the birth of revolutionary theater and its first act of liberation. And it is no coincidence that the theater revolution started in a church. (...) However, at a level even deeper than that of politics, the

church choir is indeed the seat of power in Quebec. (...) It is by examining it from this angle that the manifestation of Notre-Dame takes on its full significance. It only lasted a few minutes, but during the short time it lasted, the actual seat of power in Quebec was occupied by the revolution. "

Revolutionary Quebec had just committed another heresy. How can we ignore the fact that the Order of the Holy Sepulcher is in a straight line with the crusades of the Middle Ages when the Knights wanted to ensure Christians free access to the Holy Land. Can we believe that these Quebec neo-heretics have never read Engels, mastermind of the proletarian revolution? Can be ! ...However ! What a similarity!

The members of the Operation Déclis movement like those of the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) have nothing to envy to a certain John Bail, you know?



"If we all come from a father and a mother, Adam and Eve, how can they say and show that they are better lords than us, strong because they make us earn and plow what they spend? They are dressed in velvet and satin stuffed with vair and gray, and are dressed in poor cloth. They have the wines, the ears and the good bread, and we have only the rye, the withdrawal and the straw and drink the water. They have the living room and the beautiful manors and we have the trouble and the work, and the rain and the wind in the fields, and it is necessary that from us and our labor come what they hold the states. Good people, things cannot go well in England, nor will they go so far as the goods are all in common and it will be neither ugly nor a gentleman, unless we are all

united. “ (Cohn, *The Fanatics of the Apocalypse*, 1962, p.217)

Six centuries before (1381), the Englishman John Bail had, therefore, already explained in his heretical chronicles, the economic reasons justifying the revolt. What then to say about these writings taken from the *Manifesto of the Front de Liberation du Québec* of October 1970:

“We have had enough, .. of the promises of work and prosperity, while we will always be the assiduous servants and the lickers of the” big shot “, as long as there are Westmount, Town of Mount-Royal. , Hampsteads, Outremonts, all these strongholds of high finance on rue Saint-Jacques and on Wall Street, as long as we Quebecers have not hunted by all means, including dynamite and weapons, these big boss of the economy and politics ready for all baseness to stuff us ”.

and what about this from the 1500s:

For the extremist Taborites (the Bohemians), “the Millennium was going to be characterized by a return to the lost anarcho-communist order. Taxes, royalties, rent would be abolished as well as property in all its forms. More human authority whatsoever: *All the men live together like the brothers, no not be subject to another (...) All the lords, the nobles and the knights will be executed and exterminated in the forests like. outlaws.* ” (Cohn, 1962, p.235)

The world of the 1960s and 1970s was crossed by regional revolutionary movements on the impetus of the Cuban revolution of 1959: in 1960 alone, 17 African nations achieved national independence followed by the independence of Algeria in 1962 , ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Basque Country and Freedom) and IRA (Irish Republican Army), PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) FNL (National Front for the Liberation of Vietnam), as many revolutionary movements and liberation in progress fueled by writings such as *Les Damnés de la Terre* by Frantz Fanon, *Le Portrait du colonisé* by Albert Memmi or *Dispossession of the World* by Jacques Bergue. All of them will have a considerable influence on the ideologues of the Front de Liberation du Québec, including, of course, the famous *White Negroes of America* by Pierre Vallières.

Suddenly, in parallel with the Liberation movements, wherever Catholicism reigns, there appear, here and there, worker-priests who, in a “heretical” rereading of the Gospels, in turn initiate a reflection in which a preferential option emerges in favor of the Gospels. poor and solidarity with their struggle for social self-emancipation. This (re) new insurrectionary Christianity is called liberation theology and openly challenges the power of the Vatican.

“It is not a question of waiting for salvation from above: the biblical Exodus shows us” the construction of man by himself in the historical political struggle “ . It thus becomes the model of a salvation, not individual and private but community and “public”, the stake of which is not the soul of the individual as such but the Redemption and the liberation of an entire people. enslaved. The poor, from this perspective, are no longer an object of pity or charity but, like the

Hebrew slaves, the actor of their own liberation. As for the Church, she must cease to be a part of the system of domination: following the tradition of the great biblical prophets and the personal example of Christ, she must oppose the powerful and denounce social injustice. “ (Michael Löwy. *Rebel Century*, p.598)

Aside: In 1985, the Vatican, under the authority of Pope John Paul II, condemned the liberation theology observed in South America, in agreement with the American ideologues who declared: “The foreign policy of the United States must begin to confront liberation theology. ” (Declaration of Santa Fé, proposition 3, February 7, 1985). Subsequently, the great liberation theologian Leonardo Boff was forced into silence by the Roman curia and forced to resign because of his preferential option for the poor. On October 26, 1993, Mgr Ruiz, bishop of the Province of Chiapas in Mexico was in turn forced to resign because in the name of liberation theology, he had defended the Indians and poor peasants to the detriment of the big landowners. of the region. On March 12, 1992, in the Italian Catholic review *Panorama* Ronald Reagan, declared: “The Pope and I had found the common denominator between the United States and the Vatican because of the unity of our ideals.”

It is not a question of accidental blunders but of the rigorous doctrinal consequence of the theology of domination formulated against the message of Christ. Thus is confirmed the preferential option of the Pope and the Roman Imperial Curia for the rich and the powerful against heretics who are faithful to the words of Christ. Like its founder Peter, the Catholic Church has betrayed Christ more than three times. (Garaudy, 1995)

The dismemberment of the Black Panthers in the United States, the failure of May 68 and the crisis of October 70 in Quebec weakened the radical left but left in the consciousness of the populations concerned the desire for identity affirmation and the urgent need to take action. politically their destiny in hand, which was confirmed by the victory of the Parti Québécois in 1976.

The artistic community of Quebec tore itself even more between the pro-Marxists, the pro-Felquists, the pro-technologies and the realistic demystifiers. Two great ideological currents then separate the protagonists; the current “Art and Society” of revolutionary heretical artists of social justice, those of *Poems and songs of the Resistance* and the current “Art and life”, that of hallucinated prophets / poets, artist-scientist-architects of the great transformation of man through new technologies; those for whom “independence in itself is not a revolutionary victory” since the “real” revolution is elsewhere, “infragalactic”.

Already in 1965, artists had had the intuition. Automation, sophistication, engineering, planning, a wind of optimism towards new technologies is flowing over the province. GM assembly plant in Ste-Thérèse, Bombardier in Valcourt, hydroelectric dam on the Manicouagan, high voltage line, transport pylons, a new “race of people” is seizing both everyday objects and the irreversible transformation of the Quebec landscape: architect-designers. Science and technology will also bring their share of artistic experiments. Collectives of artists, architects, technicians are formed in order to achieve through kinetic art: the fusion

between art and technology for a better integration of art and life. Resulting from the use of industrial technical processes and the use of a whole range of electronic equipment, kinetic art reveals itself to be the “cold” art of an automatic machine, of pure logic that is inaccessible.

Too hermetic, the “dreamed” art of artist-engineers must give way to performative poetry, the art / fusion really of our time offering possibilities of infinite creation: here is the Zirmate which, nevertheless, like kinetic art, expressed, each in their own way, a “prophetic optimism in the face of the emancipatory virtues of science.” (Francine Couture)

“Hat Lemoyne! who by launching his painting with his whole body on neighboring surfaces indeed provokes a galaxy, a constellation; incessant pursuit between meteorites, luminous stars and planets. (...) Painting should no longer be considered from the point of view discovered by the author through the work, the painter of the twentieth century having become too closely linked to his work to dissociate it. In the same way, I believe, in verbal research with Claude Péloquin who launches us a kind of poetry, flights apparently without any continuation but which each include in themselves a search for sound and a deep meaning. “Love because I’m leaving,” he said. It is the soaring towards the infinitely large, the place taken in an unknown galaxy but really existing for the poet. And, Jean Sauvageau by a search for sounds facilitates us the transposition in this terrestrial and cosmic universe because the expressed world resembles so little to that to which we are accustomed. This discovery of an entire galaxy is not only done step by step, but suddenly as if these explorers of a new world wanted, enthusiastically, to make us fully discover its reality, to project us into it. Towards the end of the show, an interesting and really successful feature: the biological projection. A mass of black liquid twists, jostles, splits, produces sometimes grotesque, sometimes impressive and strange shapes, incessant motion of what seems to us a protoplasm agitated by I don’t know what internal convulsions ... “(Jean Lepage)

We are in Montreal in 1965. “Suddenly the scenery is not the same. The atmosphere is electric. The high priests put on white bitches. The lighting is ultra-violet. The members of Zirmate are scientists bringing the futuristic good word and proposing “infragalactic events.” (Quebec Underground, tome II, p. 119)

Combining drugs with research in depth psychology, scientific developments, space research and microbial technology, the Zirmate happening is in tune with its hallucinated audience who asks nothing less than to live a multisensory experience “at the limits of reality. . .” These “Twilight Light Zone” shows, in dark settings reminiscent of an archaic cave, awaken in us the Australopithecus in need of shamanic magic. By adopting the performative orientation, the performer (cultural animator) feels invested with a saving mission which corresponds perfectly to the community ideology of the time. We can already feel the growing power of the artist’s intimate desire to access the “priesthood” through the magico-religious discourse specific to all simulacra. Because, even if we attack, in form, clerical institutions, we do not erase so easily, in the depths of being, nearly 8,000 years of religious education and more than 800,000 years minimum. shamanic rituals.

Like it or not, art and the sacred (remember Offenbach, our “hallowed rockers” at the oratory celebrating his “mass for the present time”) are always intertwined, even, especially, if technology comes s. ‘emicating between them.

“As the artist is supposedly gifted in principle, he will therefore become a superman, having amazing powers and being able to use the highest techniques. It will become necessary. Everything is industrialized, it will have its function in society, a spiritual functionalism. “ (François Dallegret, Québec Underground, tome 3, p.38)

Here we are ! François Dallegret, the futuristic designer, author of Ballomatics, Abstratomics, designer of Astronef 732 and Mimosonic, darling of museums in need of futuristic experiences, has now decided to sign his works with the acronym GOD. You will notice the “metamorphosis of the soul” between the above quote from 1967 compared to the one below from 1973.

“The artist endowed with an innate talent, will no longer attach himself to a material object, such as painting or sculpture to transmit his message. Rather, it would be the other way around; the message would be emitted by electric waves sent by the artist through another human or a mechanism designed for this use. (...) The artist would be a super-being transmitting natural and super-natural messages. “ (Quebec Underground, tome 3, p. 47)

“The future is like a black hole, it’s disturbing”

It will be up to the group’s poet to theorize the Zirmatian project: “the laboratory is the place par excellence for future revelations. According to Péloquin (who dedicated his *INFRA* manifesto to NASA), the poet and the scientist will have to be one man. The machine and the technique have become, in their eyes, the body and the very movement of dreams and delirium. “ (Paul Chamberland)

This reconciliation of man and machine propels the artist into the futuristic universe where he undertakes “the poetic journey (...) in the glorification of the beautiful steel of infinitely deep machines and functional cities.” (Péloquin)

“In addition, Péloquin’s texts have obvious affinities with the Futurist manifestos. The exaltation of modern life, technology and speed recalls the aesthetic positions taken by Marinetti ... ”(Jacques Paquin, Un labo dans le poète, Tangente, no. 61, dec.1999, p.87)

As for Marinetti who liquidates, with Italian futurism, the heritage of the nineteenth century, Péloquin him, tackles the twentieth and wipes out the past. It enriches the overall refusal with the notion of total refusal. Man is solely responsible for his salvation, man is his only body-laboratory:

“INFRA requires full-scale experimentation on all that is and on all that is not quite yet; it demands a reign of research. (...) “the twentieth century needs researchers within poetry, painting and sculpture” and especially that “the twen-

tieth has nothing to do with romantics, grammarians, poetic poets, artists in love, the unfortunate of the novel, the lost and the poets-painters-sculptors-unpoint-c'est-tout. (...) there are no more artists, there are technicians within poetry, painting and sculpture.” (Péloquin, INFRA Manifesto, cited by Marcel Saint-Pierre in Visual arts in Quebec in the sixties, volume II)

Finally, the poet-infra must always eliminate the pitfalls in his path. To those who oppose the “social vocation of art” and the “national destiny of Quebec” such as the poet Gaston Miron, the futurist guru responds:

“The real social function of the poet or the technical artist is to have none. The very essence of INFRA’s denunciations lies in the incompatibility between research poetry and that which is social, entertaining, witness to a people, a country or an era; the first is poetic, the second novel and stage fright.” (Péloquin.)

Is it really so? I doubt! The cosmic artist has simply replaced political and social ideologies that are too down-to-earth to his mind with scientist ideology. Let us not forget that “everything is political”. So much so that in wanting to do “new”, we end up with new words and innovative shows, but which always express the same old ideas of the 19th century and sometimes well before. Far from being “infragalactic”, the Quebecois Zirmatiens, like several “avant-gardes”, are rather Saint-Simonians who ignore each other.

The complex alchemy within which science, visual arts, philosophy, technology and poetry are found amalgamated and where these famous multidisciplinary fusion and experimental projects are developed; we owe it to Saint-Simon.

Saint-Simon, in the *Catechism of Industrialists* (1805), as Péloquin announces in his manifestos of the sixties, develops a plea in favor of an elite (the subsistence of Péloquin?) Of scholars, artists and industrialists who will take the destiny of men in hand to ensure the happiness of all classes of society. It is the religion of progress and the missionary role of science where initiates (again!) Are called to free man from barbarism and superstitions.

Science, technique and art therefore form the backbone of the Revolution of all revolutions because they combine in a single project the functional method, the mastery of objects and matter and the “poetic” direction that the destiny of the world must take. ‘humanity. Saint-Simonism is therefore positioned as a doctrine of salvation in the same way as Christianity, Islam or Judaism. And Ernest Renan, he, subsequently, in *L’Avenir de la science*, to plead in favor of “a religion of progress whose scientific knowledge would be the new Gospel rationally organizing society.” Renan urges society to improve itself through science and its achievements.” (Papon, p. 25, 2004) Thus is transferred to science the old religious desire to replace God and overcome death. Modernity is dotted with mechanistic societies that aim to propagate the gospel of science and salvation through research and invention like Zirmate.

By scratching the varnish of “novelty” Péloquin’s writings reveal a Saint-Simonian apostle, descartes’ choirboy, “the one who transferred the divine order

to the machine”.

In short, the Zirmate project is a catch-all of science, literature and the positivist arts where the messianic finality of the Zirmatian poet is indeed the definitive victory of spirit over matter: the Redemption of man and the reign of immortality

“It can no longer be a question of knowing that he is going to die, but of reaching out with frenzied energy towards the moment when he will begin to die less and less. INFRA, It is the Experimental set in motion until CONSCIOUSNESS (...) So Isolation, then Knowledge, then Identification of the global and all-encompassing Reality, then Consciousness, then Freedom INFRA in Contemplation ... Passage from man to God and finally to man ...”(Claude Péloquin, Manifeste INFRA, Éditions de l’hexagone, 1967 in Extracts, Québec Underground, tome II, p.150-151)

Art will never save the world except for the artist of the animus who imbued with a narcissistic will seeks its power in its collusion with the power of science. Art in power is a messianic art, it is religion no longer in the service of a god as in prehistory but in the service of deified man. His work, his performance, is Mass celebrated as a sacrifice leading to personal salvation. The fusion of art and science as a doctrine of salvation therefore imposes a program, an ideology for the management and control of knowledge: the “reign of research”. As always, totalitarian drifts end up showing the tip of the nose:

“We sincerely believe that, through influential media, we can bring about changes in Man and the Cosmos”. (Remains, p. 45)

“INFRA calls for the immediate exile of all those whose works do not emit anything unusual or fantastic”. (Infra, p.26)

Once again, history repeats itself. All these “new movements have as a common denominator a messianic ideal of the art of redeeming the world and of man, of art warding off the misfortunes of history: soteriological art as defined by the avant-gardes in beginning of the XXth century. Except that soteriological art has never succeeded in establishing itself to counter the dazzling victory of capitalism celebrated by pop art.

If hippies and pacifists dressed in bright colors with flower patterns, and sported a smile, musicians and heavy metal fans would wrap themselves in black leather jackets or dark wizarding costumes and grimace. each of their public appearances. (Jérôme Bonnin , <http://www.artelio.org/art.>)

Cursed body

“Sympathy for the devils. “ (Rolling Stones)

Faced with so many faces tense with pain that cry out their dismay, so many monstrous abnormalities evolving in a degraded, heavy, polluted environment, how can man accept to live in a world where “everything is only a helpless

dream? , castrated desire, uncomfortable imagery ”? “We are made to go down and not to go up, ” concludes Ensor.

The first cripples of urbanity emerge as plague icons from the Middle Ages; the era of sadomasochistic autoflagellations is far from over. But what good use a magnified body in such a rotten society? the punks rage in chorus. Thin, asexual bodies, pierced with a safety pin, a dog collar around their neck, a loving couple standing on a leash in the street, spiky hair dyed in orange, disturbing make-up, crucifixes for earrings, torn rags adorned with swastikas, “no future” and “destroy” slogans as banners, hate speech, “I hate you too” tattooed on the forearms, these are some of the elements that made headlines from the London *Daily Mail* : “These people are the scum of civilization. Since God has never been able to fulfill his promises so well go and see Satan’s side. Because we must not be mistaken “these horsemen of the Apocalypse” really hate you.

It should be noted from the outset that we are analyzing here the original punk movement (1970) which subsequently dissolved in the 1980s, recovered by fashion. Transformed into a dress style, the “punk attitude” lost all force of corrosion and scattered into a multitude of sub-groups as harmless as each other: new wave, gothic, gloom, grunge, etc.

It is 1975. Great Britain is stuck in an economic recession, the unemployment rate is reaching staggering heights. The only horizon of youth is existential emptiness and the absolute horror of boredom. England is rotting on its feet and the young people are suffocating. A whole section of society is crumbling, the children of Cioran and the grandchildren of Nietzsche have the nausea of the “blank generation”, the empty generation of mummified witnesses of a desperate society that has chosen to self-destruct. (François Keen) Let’s go see if they don’t have some good reasons. What is behind this absent look, this sudden change of mood, this nervous sway, if not the psychotic expression of emptiness and boredom of an entire generation.

We have witnessed helplessly, live, the exposure of modern misery in all its forms, the emergence of another “lost generation” but which, this time, will stage its own pain and death. their own suffering in the pure Dadaist negation of “trash aestheticism”: the art par excellence of urban waste, hostile guerrillas and homeless people whom they have become by force of circumstances or by



choice. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it is now possible to choose the street as a career plan and make your life a performance 24 hours a day. What the artist expresses, they experience. Like the performance artist who turns violence against himself, against his own body, punk uses both his body and his “look” to spit his nihilistic hatred in our faces and show that perversion to be is their only social project.

“I am the Antichrist of American values. I’m drunk on talk show overalls. I am here to help hysterical housewives wade through their suffering. America today is afraid of reaping what it sowed. Too bad for her if we are the result. A bunch of lost and disillusioned kids. » (Marilyn Manson in *Rage*, no 9, November 1994, p.83)

“The man’s face has become ugly and worn. “ (Ball)

Punk art is the art of regression in digression. “The disintegration has to set in to the depths of the creative process itself. The body burned, scarified, soiled becomes the staging of the radical refusal of the conditions of existence of England in serious economic difficulty. “Their faces were pockmarked, acne, stammering, sick, scarred, damaged and what their new decorations emphasized was failure, already on their face. “ (Marcus)

Punk adopts the monster look to better defuse the normative discourse of a society that it challenges in the same way that the monster in the Middle Ages questioned the perfection of divine creation. Let us not forget that the monster has always fascinated Western art. Even Descartes admits that if the monster persists between fear and fascination, it is because it expresses “impulses so archaic that it would be pointless to want to eradicate them. But undoubtedly infinitely more difficult to face them. » (Baqué, *Faces*, 2007, p. 118)

This bodily dissidence is accompanied by greasy, lacerated or patched clothes, not to mention the studded black jacket recovered from the “bikers” for boys and garish makeup, tapered stockings, torn skirts pinned with soiled sanitary tampons. According to Bolon’s study in *Morale du Masque* , punks “mimic Evil putting on the bizarre clothes in order to dynamise conventions and bring out repressed“ truth ”. Their provocations aim above all to destabilize social conscience, to widen the abyss on which they

are seated and which they carefully try to forget. ” (Marcus and Bolon, cited in Le Breton, *Signes Identity*, p.70-71)

Even the language must be dislocated. The writing, gutted, the syntax exploded, the grammar annihilated. Such is the punk culture, a neo-prehistoric culture expressed by esoteric signs, kabbalistic tags. While the hippies claimed their belonging to the world, the punks claim a territory of their own that they appropriate. “Existential” marks appear on the walls of their neighborhood and on the buildings they frequent on a daily basis. Like the dogs they adopt, they mark their territory revealing radical possession of the clan, gang or ethnic group.

Graffiti and tags form the backbone of a new pictorial grammar like so many coded hieroglyphics understood only by initiates. Urban taggers transform the walls of slums, subway trains, suburban trains like so many works inaccessible to museums, galleries, collectors and against everything “an art system” and even against everything the socio-cultural apparatus, artist grants, government programs, which underpin it.

“Art is the most beautiful of lies” said Debussy, punk will give it its counterpart: its true ugliness. Dada masks have already been described as hideous faces, scarred with scars like the faces of soldiers mutilated by a bayonet. The punks will be inspired by it. With its tyrannosaur crests on its head, it looks like punk has barely escaped the walls of rock art and left the caves of Lascaux. Branding, cutting, placing subcutaneous implants perpetuate the initiation rituals of primitive tribes as opposition to contemporary societies and express the rejection of the false discourse of well-being held by the media and advertising. The punk attitude is part of the neo-primitivism art movement. These modern primitives intend to reintroduce “tribal” at the heart of modernity. Their body becomes the ultimate refuge of experimentation and singular identity, a question of “making one’s place” and breaking out of anonymity. The physical ugliness of punk and this is its scandalous effect, defeats our identity in the human figure to make it fall into animality. The ugliness of punk unconsciously returns us to our moral ugliness. As a living art, punk uses the monster’s unnatural nature to express its counter culture, hence our dismay at this nihilist vision.

A century ago, the European philosopher Nietzsche brought to light this malaise that afflicted the XXth century nihilism, the expression of a uni-

versal decadence that generates a sense of absurdity at the spectacle of a meaningless world.

And Rotten, the singer of the Sex Pistols to scream :

“The future does not exist, the future does not exist,
The future does not exist for you. “

The punks are the cruel image of the much-heralded catastrophe of the average man, mediocre, sick of our democracies, the very type of decadence, decomposition, and weakness which present themselves as the Nietzschean “last man”. They feel more than any other “the horror of a civilization which allows massacres to continue, which sends its youth to be killed or quite simply leaves it no hope: no future (...) “ (Poupeau in *Siècle rebelle*)

Even if the observation still persists, the punk movement lost its strong protest against the system at the same time as the disappearance of musical groups (Sex Pistols, Clash, the Ramones, Patti Smith, Iggy Pop) supporting the cause. But it was above all the dazzling recovery of the punk look by the clothing and cosmetics industry that radically changed the status of the movement and defused the scandal by diverting it towards mass consumption.

Cyberpunk

Biomechanical body



If Warhol wanted to become a machine, the characters in HR Giger have already achieved the great biomechanical fusion. He is the great eroto-bio-mechanical master of video games and of all cyberpunk culture, the most influential artist in the pictorial world of new technologies. Giger’s biomechanical creatures are no longer human, with him, “God is a monster. “Creator of *Alien*, monster of Hollywood cinema, fin-de-siècle style, the Swiss surrealist painter Giger, in his works / paper including *Necromonicon* , *Biomechanics* , reveals to us a whole insane universe” of buttocks sodomized by autonomous penises and cemented by excrements, a quadriplegic child covered with boils, “erotomechanical” images of human orifices penetrated by heavy-metal phal-

luses ”, in short, he presents to us his biomechanical cosmogony of “flesh and metal ”monsters expressing his post-humanist phobias who still confuse, even still, the most seasoned Freudian psychiatrists.

“Bio-mechanical” bodies, a term used by Giger, are the epitome of technological tribalism and say a lot about the human condition in cyberculture. For Ray Bradbury, famous science fiction writer, “these illustrations predict the future”.

The false mirror of kitsch.

Pop art marked the comeback of kitsch no longer judged negatively as in the past, it is the Trojan horse of a culture of artifice valued by the desire for possession. In fact, pop art celebrates the drunkenness and vertigo of the merchant festival. It is offered as a luxury advertisement for a kitsch art of living. Due to the enormous development of advertising and mass communications since WWII, we passively accept a whole panoply of new signs, slogans, images and emblems. Quietly a whole ersatz of “artistic pathologies” has been set up for those who are precisely insensitive to culture. It is now clear that kitsch has great propaganda potential.

For Abraham Moles, “the kitsch position lies between fashion and conservatism as the acceptance of” the greater number “. Kitch is therefore essentially democratic: it is acceptable art, which does not shock our mind by a transcendence outside of everyday life, by an effort that exceeds us - especially if it must make us exceed ourselves. . Kitch remains essentially mass art, that is to say, acceptable by the masses and offered to them as a system. It is through mediocrity that kitsch products arrive at authentically fake. It is mediocrity that unites them, that melts them into a set of aesthetic, functional, political, or religious perversities. ”

In fact the pop art / kitsch tandem is to democracy and the middle class what the avant-garde was to anarchy and the marginalized and marks the victory of the capitalist ideology of the typically Western middle class. The citizen became a consumer, an exponential new class of baby boomers.

If “the project of postmodern society is to offer none”, then kitsch is the perfect representation. We take up the reflection of Hermann Broch for whom kitsch designates the style of an era incapable of creating a style. Kitch is the art of the consumer society where all the arts, all fashions, all styles, amalgamate into so many stereotypes of beauty, simulacra and truth, from romance novels to clichés. political speeches, fake advertising lies. Kitch is a culture of saturation. We live in the era of “scrapbooking” as a sublimation of contemporary individualistic society. The style of our time is that of all styles, abstract or documentary images, portraits, decorative forms, self-fiction texts mixed up and staged in the great book of everyday life.

At the beginning, kitsch meant an artistic and industrial production of objects of bad taste, a sort of junk, flashy art ; kitsch was then associated with the world of objects and superfluous decorations as in Art Nouveau. Today kitsch not only denotes an aesthetic malaise but propels it as an undeniable social fact con-

taminating all of Western and capitalist civilization. So if we look at kitsch as an indication of a profound social change, we see that it does indeed represent the current form of the imagination, both personal and collective. Kitch is not an “anti-aesthetic” but the slow degradation of the “system of the fine arts” peak of the challenge of “beautiful” and “good taste” academic enterprise at the beginning of XXth century. This amalgamation of technology and consumption distorts artistic taste into a caricature of art.

Writers and philosophers, mainly from Central Europe, Broch, Kundera, Schulz, understood before their time that in modern society where the subject slips towards its objectification, kitsch became an existential trait of being ; there is a “drop of kitsch” in every individual. Hitler and Stalin understood before their time the full imagological scope of an ideological and political kitsch, like Richelieu in France, to impose on the masses formal standards for all artistic creations, both literary and visual.

A decor of plastic, glass and steel, junk that invades, even occupies our entire psychological space like a kind of pathology. We work less and less to realize our potential, but more and more to consume. The motive for consumption takes precedence over personal achievement. The possession of objects is the new conquest, the being is defined by its acquisitions, “design” by its objects. Kundera will highlight that kitsch is an existential attitude of man’s need “to look at oneself in the mirror of embellishing lies and to recognize oneself there with moved satisfaction. »(L’art du roman, 1986)

Popular, democratic kitsch is intimately linked to pop art as the triumph of capitalism and mass consumption. This kitsch tragicomedy demonstrates the mechanism of the commodity economy: junk and junk replace quality goods; the window mannequin becomes the symbol of the alienation of individuals bewitched by so many golden calves. So, often, the newly acquired original work is taken off the market, hidden from public view and hidden in a sealed vault. The work is therefore no longer an object of contemplation but of speculation; the more it reaches a high rating on the art market, the more hidden and secure it is. From now on, the work will be seen through communication technologies such as photography, cinema, video, television. This “cultural food” relayed at home by the mass media promotes the market for facsimiles and posters. Thus emerges a notion of kitsch as a common denominator of our post-modern civilization.

Advertising is so invasive that it adapts, sticks like thistle to all possible surfaces; labels stick to products, posters take hold of walls, objects in shop windows, logos and brands in neon calligraphy light up the night, slogans invade radio waves, advertising spots, television and computer screens . Even the facades of houses cannot escape it. We are forced to note that the public space is entirely invaded by the advertiser who extends his sprawling visibility into the private office. “The *Res publicita* has dethroned the *Res publica*. “. (Besson)

“Today; unfortunately the disappearance of the avant-gardes does not mean the disappearance of the rearguards, it is rather even the triumph, in a certain way, of the rearguard ... But these are not groups, c ‘is the fact that the whole of art is

also assigned to recapitulate a little all the previous forms, to remake the history of art in reverse and to manage all its past, that is a problem at the background. Connors called it the kidnapping of modern art, that is, this way of taking up all forms in a juxtaposition, a chaotic mosaic. “

“So the distinction between art and the production of common, banal images is less and less clear. The only one to have taken note and to manage with radicality this total trivialization of aesthetics, to have gone to the other side of aesthetics, is Warhol. In my opinion, apart from him, we are dealing with all kinds of artistic, aesthetic forms, which, somewhere today, are more animated by disillusion. We get the impression that even artists no longer believe in aesthetic illusion, that aesthetic illusion is dead, that they are managing the decomposition of their own instrument of vision. Disappearance of art, whose end already announced by Hegel dates a long time ago. The disappearance of the aesthetic dimension, this event was handled for, say, a century and a half. All modern art is the story of a disappearance, a destructuring, a deconstruction of art. “

“But now it’s over, the process has come beyond its end, we are also beyond the end. Now we are just recycling. Effectively recycling the vestiges of past forms, THAT’S THE KITSCH. »(Baudrillard Jean, Beyond the End , www.humains-associés.fr)

“To be ‘civilized’ in the Western sense is to have many needs”. (Moles)

Art Nouveau, the kitsch of the beginning of the century, elitist art of the triumphant bourgeoisie, transformed, at the end of the same century, into a global system of social representation associated with the triumph of capitalism and the middle class, it is a dominant system which covers almost all of social life, the spirit of which is found as much in visual arts, music and literature, as much as in fashion and decoration.

“They wanted to fight, and win. They wanted to fight, to conquer their happiness. But how to fight? Against who ? Against what ? They lived in a strange and shimmering world, the shimmering universe of mercantile civilization, the prisons of abundance, the fascinating traps of happiness. (...) The enemy was invisible. Or, rather, he was in them, he had rotten, gangrenous, ravaged them. They were the stuffing turkeys. Small docile beings, the faithful reflections of the world which taunted them. They were buried up to their necks in a cake of which they would never have but the crumbs. »(Georges Pérec, Les Choses, a story of the sixties)

Modern capitalism has taken over the entire strategy of diversion put in place by the avant-gardes and turned the weapon against the protesting aggressor. Rebel art therefore essentially contributes to renewing more effectively the society that produces it. The insubordination of the anti-heroes fully plays its role as a valve. Henceforth art will be confined to resistance; “soft” resistance which will act as a barometer of the degree of frustration, which by this very fact will indicate to the system where it must intervene to curb and plug the breach of dissatisfaction (think of May 68) and thus consequently regulate its development by satisfaction immediate desires (think of the consumer society) and thus

appease the tumult.

“Everything must be consumed including our destiny. “

Partying is sort of the solution the West has found to end this endless orgy of negativity that is human history. Let us stuff ourselves to the point of becoming obese like helium balloons, consume the futility of the object-gadget as a sign of useless material to give ourselves the impression of paradoxically continuing to live. We thus become “prisoners of the useless”. Decadence, I cry out your name!

“All, I wanna do, it’s have some fun. I got the feeling, I’m not the only one. “ (Sheryl Crow)

It is not the party that is the problem, it is when there is the party everywhere and all the time. Even the companies are adjusting the festive agenda of the working days while waiting to relocate the company at the request of the shareholders. Unlike Marx who foresaw “that the withering away of the state and the disappearance of work would ensure finally socialist humanity an unlimited amount of leisure, it is clear that it is rather neo-liberal capitalism and the state that were able to hide the vagaries of life through the promised feast with a great deal of publicity.

Rebellion for rebellion is like art for art. Nothing is art and rebellion since everything is art and festive. Ultimately, nothing is celebration anymore since everything is festive.

And “great art” is no exception, a sort of sophisticated Gnostic sect of an active minority cut off from the mass, relegated to the micro milieu of artist-run centers or disused factories. Think how quickly teenage graffiti art from the Bronx, Harlem, Brooklyn found its way into the trendy Soho galleries of East Village fully integrated into the market. It is astounding to note how easily the market neutralizes any dispute, any subversion. Haring and Basquiat’s graffiti, icons of the New York underground, have gone from sordid alleys to the luxurious salons of Fifth Avenue in a few months. Contrary to the doctrines of salvation underlying the artistic programs and artistic movements of this century, the capitalist economy does not seek to save the world but to own it, to own everything.

“Perhaps it should be said in a sense, that the Hegelian analysis of the end of art (of the fine arts) is being realized, the great moment of art has passed away. The avant-garde has run out of steam, art is nothing more than an elegant distraction, high-end consumption. - The avant-gardes remain but trample and no longer disturb anyone. - Everything happens as if art only served to feed the network of galleries and museums, organize monster exhibitions, constitute a financial investment, become an object of speculation or else, it leaves indifferent like information quiet, wise, not very passionate, a vector of sociability in disenchanting times.- The heavy creativity of our societies is now located in the sciences and techniques. (...) What can compete with the emotional and technical power of test-tube babies, the manipulation of genes, the conquest of space? We expect much more from art, but a lot from laboratories and companies.

Culture, art, advertising, all of this inexorably slips into the fields of gadgets, over-media coverage, and accessorization of life. »(Lipovetsky quoted in Art and publicity, p.508-509)

“Consume more, you will live less” (Fluxus slogan)

Since the Paleolithic, the premises for all religion, including consumerism fetishism, its rituals, its temples, begin with the worship of objects collected like seashells and then made like statuettes. To consume is to be part of social life, to lack money is heresy, a simple observation that Ulrike Meinhof will call the *Konsumterror*; the terrorism of consumption and its fetishes.

Aparté: In 1760, Charles de Brosses, scholar traveler, called fetishism this first form of religion embodied in the object long before the cult of abstract and invisible divinities. De Brosses explains to us that fetishes are adored for themselves. So where does their religious significance come from? Our scholar, by studying the subject closely, discovered a fetishist cult called “boetye” which consisted in contemplating its reflection on stones coated with grease acting as a mirror. What the individual worshiped in the fetish was the relationship between the object and his or her own reflected image. The intimate objects thus fetishized quickly became objects in which all social relations were condensed and thus became signs of exchanges and cordiality between individuals. This practice subsequently evolved into a commercial dimension and the fetish object became the currency we know today. Note the effigy, the portrait always present on our coins.

Globalization seeks to achieve what no religion has achieved; or achieve universality through the establishment of a unique global culture: trade. Antiquity and the Middle Ages offered an essentially theistic religious culture, from the Renaissance to the end of the 19th century a humanist culture oscillating between materialism and scientism was imposed, followed by an atheist humanist culture deviated towards dogmatic atheism and finally we Here is, for the first time in history, at least in the West, in the presence of a truly secular and commercial culture. The cult of money has ended up taking the place of God and even proposes a demiurgic hegemony of the market and consumerism as a universal finality.

“Homo œconomicus is the ultimate avatar of instrumental reason. The general model of modern existence is that of technical and economic requirement. »(...) In liberal thought, there is a reduction of individuals to the same denominator consumerism; rejection of the principle of diversity. »(Philippe Engelhard, *The Global Man*, p. 292, 308)

We are witnessing a real canning of the world and of our humanist aspirations. What Karl Marx in *The Capital*, Technology Name “the fetishism of commodities” : the merchant of happiness earthly utopia in achieving our desires by the possession of the goods the “boetye” object of capitalism.

Pushing the analysis still further, Marx will deduce that commodities also reflect the labor relations which made them possible, hence their so desirable social

qualities. Under the effect of advertising, the mirror effect of the object reaches such a limit that the relations between things replace the relations between men. There is no longer a class war but rather a war of goods where capitalism is always winning. The pinnacle is reached when all the merchant fetishes amalgamate one another to form the neoliberal “The Great Fetish”.

Ultimately, the man who has become a commodity is himself consumable - the black market in organs - a sort of anthropophagy which echoed in these terms:

“Capitalism would henceforth be the consumption of humanity by itself. By placing man in the continuous cycle of nature’s uses, the utility society makes man a consumable resource like any other. (Denis Duclos, *Autophagy*, the great threat of the end of the century, *Monde Diplomatique*, August 1996, p.14)

Kitsch man as a consumable resource is one of the fundamental changes at the start of the third millennium. Thus we find ourselves in exactly the same position as the Native American who traded his fur skins for the illusion of glass beads and mirror pieces from European merchants.

Even art cannot escape amalgamation. The neoliberal capitalist has understood very well what the work of art can bring to a company’s social communication strategy. Mona Lisa can thus be found on cheese wrappers, spools of thread, bath towels, as are the Greco-Roman sculptures in faux marble from suburban gardens. So much for the recovery of academic works of art. It is different for contemporary art which gives rise to a very specific marketing strategy : the collection of companies.

The *corporate art* associated with *corporate* sponsorship comes full circle : at the start of the last century, if art was inspired by advertising processes, it is undeniable today that art has indeed become advertising itself. for the benefit of corporate branding. It is about getting people to admit that there was no solution for art outside the market.

“Obese and triumphant, symbol of economic power, corporate art is no longer this referenced and modernist museum art, but a new artistic-advertising academism. (...) The advertising future of the art world and the stake that art represents for the economic world show a rapprochement of paradigms : that of visibility and creativity - or if you will, the link that secretly, and perhaps for a long time, artistic innovation and industrial and market production ”. (Christian Besson, *Art World and Res publicita in Art et Publicité*, op. Cit., P.495-497)

The work of art is therefore irremediably diverted towards the “corporate image”, the corporate image giving a particular symbolic connotation of the company as if it were amulets or relics invested with magical and even religious powers. . Even more spectacular effect when popular stars are added to it as advertising icons, a sort of sacred investiture where the artificial myth seeks alliance with the authentic myth. Imagogy thus leads to myhtagogy conferring a mythical value on elements, on institutions, on characters to whom this value does not suit. This diversion of the mythical value towards the false myth is what we call the “myth-kitsch”. (Dorfles Gillo, *The Kitsch*)

We are not witnessing the “end of art” but rather the deconstruction of the aesthetic mysticism of art for art as a religion whose ideal was placed above nature and life.

“I created all the parties, all the triumphs, all the dramas. I invented new flowers, new stars, new flesh, new languages. Well ! I have to bury my imagination and the memories. A beautiful glory of artist and storyteller carried away! Me ! me who follows me says mage or angel, exempt from any morality, I am returned to the ground, with a duty to seek, and the rough reality to extinguish! Peasant ! “(Arthur Rimbaud)

This confession of Rimbaud marked the end of the romantic genius of the rebellious artist and contains all the dichotomy between artistic creation and its reception, its impregnation in society. The contemporary artist just like the philosopher, the poet or the scientific researcher presents an unprecedented reflection of the being in relation to the complexity, the flaws and the exaltations of society. Through the “materials” of dreams, magic and the sublime, the artist presented a gaze that wanted to be transcendent and societal, the artist presented a “social project”. Today the process of individuation is so powerful that it has reduced the subversive genius to an identity function essential to “self-invention”. We are all rebels, it is well known. Since we are all artists, artistic production, however talented it may be, slips more and more towards the overproduction of the gadget. The subversiveness of art when it periodically presents itself is immediately drowned in the ebb and flow of the myriad products offered on the consumer market. The work of art has become an artefact.

We are therefore witnessing the apogee of Western art of the materialist, capitalist and democratic society in gestation since the Renaissance. All commodities are art, all works of art are commodities, everyone is an artist and it is the market of supply and demand that determines who will be elected to the pantheon of contemporary art. “Art for the sake of art” is identical to the expression “business is business”. It was Bourdieu who was the first to notice that modern cultural life is organized into “cultural industries” which do not escape economic and social constraints. The cultural field is both a commercial field and a state affair. Thus between the work and the public is inserted a panoply of marketing agents, publishers, art dealers, gallery owners, artists’ agents, curators and agents of the State who invest the intellectual field and transform it into a circuit of distribution, the art object becomes an object of speculation. Dubuffet will denounce “the asphyxiating culture” as religion once was. The era of the art guerrillas is now over; culture supports them and makes them harmless by recovering their works in the distribution circuit, no avant-garde will escape it now that society has understood the lesson that Andy Warhol instilled in us.

“In Picabia, Duchamps, the machine is still present as surrealist mechanicity, not as mechanicality, that is to say as automatic reality of the modern world. Warhol, for his part, identifies purely and simply with the mechanical, which gives his images their contagious power (...) This is why Warhol can make himself the screenwriter of a perfect representation, equal for all. All the images are good, since they also create an illusion. All the people are great, and the pic-

tures we take of them are bound to be successful. It is the universal democracy of figuration. Warhol does just that: figuration. (...) The whole world, not only scenic and media, but political and moral is dedicated to figuration. It is about a metaphysics of our modern world, which joins that of the unconditional simulacrum (...) Because this is indeed the destiny of all our techniques: to make the world even more illusory. Warhol understood this, he understood that it is the machine which generates the total illusion of the modern world. “ (Jean Baudrillard, *The Perfect Crime*)

Simulacrum, illusion, this is the contemporary kitsch universe of which Las Vegas is the capital. American popular culture invades architecture to the point of making it disappear under a cloud of neon, multicolored signs. In 1955, in the suburbs of Minneapolis, Victor Gruen invented the shopping town, a line of shops under one roof in the middle of an ocean of parking lots. The shopping centers, veritable merchant cities, were followed by the creation of the spectacle city, Las Vegas. From his study on the “Strip” of Las Vegas, the architect Robert Venturi detected there an essential lesson for the affirmation of an “urban architecture knowing also to appropriate the communicative richness of the vulgar constructions of the era of the freeways and supermarkets. “ The “trade-show” phenomenon will culminate with Disneyland, the city that looks at itself and consumes itself. The escalation of giant advertisements with their signs-logos-sculpture juxtaposes the real and the illusory of the new American middle class, a jumble of machines, electronic images, comics books, soap TV, drive-ins, mixers , gadgets of all kinds, an accumulation of mass-produced, fun, quickly consumable and disposable products. Behind the spectacular vision of this over-mediated world looms the homogenization of desire for purposes of “voluntary servitude” made in the USA. (Béret Chantal, *The Pop Years*, Edition of the Center Pompidou, Paris, 2001)

If kitsch is a lie and yet continues to proliferate and prosper, it is because modern man needs this lie to identify with it, as with the game where he deludes himself about his earnings and his future life.

Kermann Broch rightly reminds us that: “kitsch art could neither be born nor subsist if it did not exist the kitsch man who loves it, who as a producer wants to make it and as a consumer is ready to buy it. and even to pay a good price for it “. (A few remarks about kitsch, p.7) And Brock wonders : “ What kind of work of art or, more exactly, what artificial creation is he trying (the kitsch) to transform the human life? The answer is simple: in a work of neurotic art, that is to say a work of art which imposes an absolutely unreal convention on reality and which forces it into it. “

Previously, “great art” was the art of human excess, today kitsch is art tailored to man “Seven Up. Kitsch is present in all of us, hence its irresistible rise. Because kitsch, before being an art, is above all an attitude linked to an idealized identity composition, a sort of second virtual staging of life.

“The truth is that we don’t want the truth” (Hentsch)

Throughout the XIXth century under the influence of romanticism and ideal-

ism, the artist, the writer's mission is to compete with the politician by writing a social project by calling the release civic engagement. It will be up to Victor Hugo to celebrate committed art by creating the doctrine of "art for humanity" : art that must denounce the defects of society and help correct them by founding the collective identity. To achieve this ideal, the artist must engage in struggle while claiming intellectual autonomy.

At the beginning of the last century, the story, as much in the intimate dreams of the individual as in socio-political utopias, narrated a collective vision of salvation. The new man was being developed in parallel, was being built at the same time as the new society, between hope and illusion. The intimate and collective story had the same desire to propose a social project in accordance with individual hopes. Collective and personal identity were linked, formed a coherent whole within all the concepts proposed despite the various means put forward for their realization. From now on "ideas rule the world". It is the explosion of artistic manifestos translating into their terms social debates competing with political programs. Whether one is Futurist, Constructivist, Bauhausian, Surrealist or Primitivist or Expressionism, Abstract or Minimalist or Geometricist, all of them proposed "possible" collective identities deemed at least achievable. After the Second World War, it is clear that the project to engage the artist and the intellectual in general did not deliver the goods, nor the expected effects.

Recourse to history has enabled us to grasp that art is never independent of the social, political and even theological context of its time. Since the beginning of the XXth century, all the terms of the relationship between the intellectual world, the arts versus policy have been explored; from rupture (cubism, fauvism, expressionism, abstraction) to revolution (futurism, constructivism), from insubordination (dadaism, surrealism) to subordination (pop art, kitsch), from the complete dissociation between art and politics (post modernity) to the privatized art of autofiction. In a century the art scene has gone from "we" to "I". The artist as much as the intellectual is no longer the torchbearer of the ideal, nor even the beacon diffusing light.

At the end of the XXth century, the revolutionary certainties are so shaken, especially in Quebec referendum after two failures, a finding of an overall failure favored isolationism towards individualism if not selfishness. The personal story, the autofiction takes over from the collective. Everyone seeks to forge their destiny from the panoply of identity possibilities in order to reconcile a personal and social life project. From the 1980s, throughout the Western world, a gloom took hold in the art landscape. These are the years of withdrawal. The artist, like a wounded animal, returns to his den to heal his wounds. Flayed alive, disillusioned, the artist undertakes his long psychotherapy in search of his origins, his identity. Portrait, self-portrait, staging of his personal obsessions, so many signs that denote a clear tendency to individuation. Art becomes exploration, introspective experimentation of the artist's life as a "personal project." The installation also marks a touching return to the crafts of childhood where the toddler built a world all to himself with the objects that surrounded him. This childish game, revisited by the artist in psychoanalysis, is then enriched with an unsuspected spatial, visual and sound dimension.

It is the period of "me, myself and I" which is perpetuated in a writing, a photograph, installations-sculptures expressing the "I" where the artist as the traveler of the XXIst century becomes a staging of oneself in the world: Me in front of the Sphinx, Me in front of the Eiffel Tower, Me in Place Saint-Pierre, Me in front of the Taj Mahal, Me in the Sahara, Me among the Innu of Minganie in Canada, etc.

The artist's vision becomes a fantasy of his personal universe in fusion with the world. The phenomenon of world music is a good analogy for this fusion. In this new musical movement, we only talk about sampling and sequencing, sounds, remixes of various music listed around the world. It is the copy / paste of computer software applied to art in general. It is the "cut off" in literature as proposed by the beatnik Burroughs where are juxtaposed bits of scattered sentences gleaned here and there in the dailies and placed on a musical track. In painting, it is the remixing on the canvas of organic elements of body art such as blood or shit and in sculpture, the introduction of fresh meat or viscera. This is the era of mergers, of convergence: dance / video / theater fusion for example. The same language applies to the world of the image with video / sculpture / installation.

From the 1980s, the phenomenon of world music or "world music" is a good example of this fusion of cultures which will henceforth be called globalization; not to be confused with globalization: a neocolonialism with an economic and consumerist flavor which, like a typhoon, swallows everything, man and culture in its path. Globalization aims for the uniformity of culture while cosmopolitanism or globalization is plural and feeds on differences.

But beware, this artistic mixing is not at all a guarantee of social cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism, as practiced by the "world generation" in the West, transforms into icons of modernity nations and peoples who are sinking into misery and deculturation. We love these reservoirs of mythological archaisms so much that we destroy those who are their instigators. Only the myth interests us since, as Barthes affirmed: "the function of myth is to evacuate the real" or, as an American general said more prosaically during the conquest of the West: "a good Indian is an Indian dead."

No, art will not save the world because it cannot serve on its own as a criterion and an ethic for good human conduct. Too often, the history of art clearly shows us the collusion between the artist and the power: we saw it with the Italian futurism movement and fascism; renowned filmmakers participated in the rise of Nazism or celebrated Stalinism, the genocides in Serbia and Croatia were fueled by men of letters and novelists and even poets like Radovan Karadjic became war criminals in the service of cleaning up ethnic. Art can do nothing against barbarism. If we can say of an art that it is of cosmopolitan influence by its synthesis, by its combinations, by its borrowings and sometimes plagiarism, one cannot however apply this qualifier to its author, nor even to the spectator. or to the reader.

You can be cosmopolitan in form, that is to say love to eat Tunisian couscous, wear oriental silks, dance to the Afro-beat, sing Inuit throat songs, read the great

Russian or South American classics, adopt the tribal rites of scarification of the skin, piercing, tattooing of African inspiration while in the end, when it comes to cohabiting with these peoples, the exotic quickly breaks the camp. There is a huge gap between the sharing of cultures and territory; talk to the Native Americans of Canada, the United States and the Aborigines of Australia. What to say about the Gypsies? We all love to celebrate Djengo Reinhardt as the greatest gypsy guitarist but what about the socio-economic situation of his excluded people? Here too the cosmopolitanism of ancient Greece is in struggle with Roman ethnocentrism: cosmopolitan society has difficulty finding its way in the sometimes xenophobic twists and turns of national politics.

Post-modern nomadism is the great cosmopolitan illusion. Stateless, citizen of the world, the post-modern subject continually wants to be elsewhere on condition that this elsewhere contains the minimum of comfort, security, in short, elsewhere must be a bit like home. We are no longer nomads since we travel the world as tourists strolling in an exotic souk smelling the lowest price as in any Wall Mart in this world. All the artifacts are found on the shelves of the great global supermarket of humanity.

Personal identity follows the same path. Through cinema, song, theater, television and the arts in general, we are all looking for scripts that answer the questions of our time and models that can be integrated into the process of building our identity. We meet in front of the supermarket of all possible. So much so that today's meaningful stories have multiplied into categories of all kinds, always touching more closely on personal and intimate concerns. (Chalvon-Demersay cited in *Invention of the Self*, p.152-153)

“Cleverly playing with one's identity logic” is not for everyone. In this sense, the rebellion is not negative. The art scene has been a field of experimentation where all research and all claims have been expressed : destruction, construction, deconstruction, archaism, sex, war, subversion, melancholy, everything is there, unfortunately we also know that all have failed. “We are in a completely paradoxical state, which I believe is reflected in a fear, a sort of collective panic in front of this situation where everything has already happened, where utopias are realized, where in reality we are in total disillusion.” (Baudrillard)

Since the 1990s, we have witnessed an explosion, a polyphony of speeches which collide mainly on the internet. We no longer assert ourselves by defending ideas outside ourselves but from what we are and even from what we believe to be. The revolutionary “We” fades away, historical amnesia sets in, the collective project of society bursts into a multitude of personal projects.

Telling stories is not new to society, as archaic myths attest. Except that the evolution of the fictional narrative was inevitably confronted with reality. The expected identity script was therefore continually reshaped by life experience. But it happens that the gap between the desired identity and reality is so deep that it causes identity rupture. It follows a lag often a confrontation which destabilizes the individual. There is then a gradual withdrawal from ordinary action towards contemplation or reverie, further strengthening the virtual identity.

Internet is the apology of kitsch, make-up, illusion like the narcissistic sexual parade on “sex-chat”, it is the nickel presentation of oneself with retouched image on Photoshop, download as a bonus. The more we retouch the original, the more we participate in our erasure from the world; the image as “a pseudo-ideal which takes the place of a reality already existing in the world.” “Hyper individualistic art now requires complete adherence to technology by offering virtual universes of complete immersions that feed a collective narcissism leading to an entirely electronic religiosity. Our image on *Facebook* resembles the false gods of antiquity called “idols”. It is no longer a question of taking the place of God but of erecting oneself in one's own God. The distorting mirror of virtual reality thus destabilizes us even in our own privacy.

“Here is the new fence: the finished man, locked in his ego, his identity and his rights, who does not tolerate any foreign reference to his desires, his body and his origins. Apparently open to everyone, the finished man allowed himself to be enclosed in a cocoon which he himself had secreted. This confinement, which is caused by the degradation of the sense of the ideal, is the mark of today's narcissistic individualism which divides contemporary man from a world populated by images. (...) As soon as the referents and ideals disappear, in short all his vertical sense of otherness, the best survival strategy available to finished man is to fall back on himself, should he have been the only measure of his desires.” (Marc Chevrier, *The Time of the Finished Man*, p.91)

This is accompanied by a new relationship to time, that of the present moment. Poetry is the loss of the thread of our history. The defeat of “ideas that rule the world” confronts the individual with an ideological dead end, well expressed by the slogan “no future”. The ambient skepticism extinguishes any long-term vision. What Taguieff, in *The erasure of the future* will call “presentism”: since the future has no future for us then let us fall back on the present moment. The main characteristic of this new relation to time encourages individuals to register in immediacy, not to say in perpetual improvisation. In art it is the era of permanent novelty where any innovation is decreed in advance to be brilliant.

“We live in an age where you figure that you are thinking as soon as you use a new word.” (Alexandre Vialatte)

“The significance of this cultural phenomenon is all the more considerable since, perhaps for the first time in the history of art, there is no longer any tension between artists, critics, collectors and the public. .) Only one thing matters: not to risk having to admit one day that you have not understood the importance of a new artistic experience.” (Eliade, *Aspects du Mythe*, p.230)

Kitsch implosion

Impoesy also means implosion. This technical system is extremely rigid and complex. So much so that even the lucidity necessary for the revolt remains confined to a small group that we refuse to hear, reinforcing the immobility of the system. But what is this new reality? Deregulation, mutation, recurrent formations, collapse of the family, of the State, all are symptoms of a once unifying reality which has exploded into a multitude of versions of this same reality.

Everything, spirituality, politics, economy, sectarianize in thousands of pressure groups or sects that run through life like a chick with a severed head. Our societies have lost the sense of fraternity and solidarity on which all great social projects were founded in the past. From now on, everyone has an “à la carte” project. “The state power passes from the political to the administrative, the people representatives to lobbyists, nation to ethnic, religious or cultural.

We are then forced to delegate and we thus put ourselves in a position of powerlessness. We are asking more and more lobbies to take over our interests and responsibilities. We then ask scientific and financial



“Because the obese never breaks out, it decomposes from the inside under the influence of cancerous metastases which proliferate ad infinitum. Obese people never explode, they implode. (...) We are no longer in growth but in outgrowth, We are in a society of proliferation, of what continues to grow without being able to be measured for its own ends, of what develops without regard to its own definition, the effects of which multiply with the disappearance of the causes, and which leads to a prodigious congestion of systems; (...) it is saturation which is fatal: it creates at the same time a situation of tetanization and inertia. Striking is above all the obesity of all current systems ... (...) And the whole society starts to revolve around



elites, trapped like us in the same technocratic culture to provide solutions which ultimately end up giving us the choice between different variants of technocracy. In the long run, all the lobbies, artists included, become cogs of the same megamachine. It all makes a system.

One does not change the trajectory of the machine as a dominant cult so easily, so much so that for all these reasons, the system is rather heading towards its implosion, a complete collapse. (Thuillier) What to do when the size of our companies is so enormous that it is almost impossible to manage it humanely. Management of obesity: store everything, list everything, memorize everything, consume everything until total collapse.

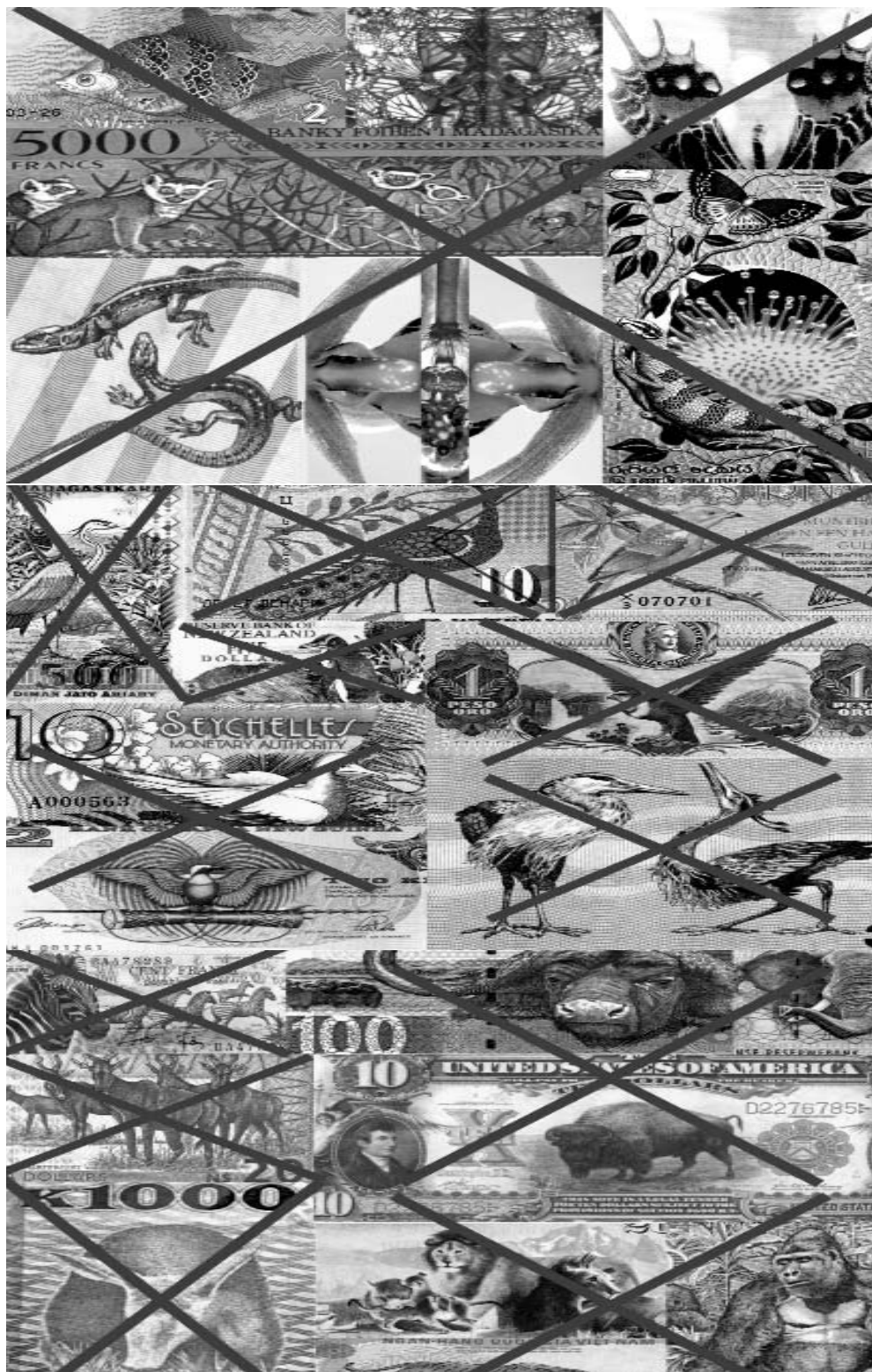


this point of inertia (...) It is no longer a crisis but of a fatal event, of a slow-motion catastrophe. »(Baudrillard, 1990, p. 38-41)

“We live in a world where living objects die to increase the amount of dead objects.” (Rogers)

The saturation of dead objects such is kitsch. Kitsch is the accumulation of heterogeneous identity signs, trinkets, gadgets, regulations, laws, junk food, antidepressants, desires forever unfulfilled that condemn us to obese consumption.

We all find ourselves, politicians, economists, trade unionists, scientists, artists, ordinary citizens, trapped in a



logic of cultural vision much deeper than our political choices. Whether one is left, right, centrist, anarchist on the Internet, it does not matter since in any case, the entire West is fascinated and possessed by the myth of the machine. However, the current technocracy is revealed as the kitsch culmination of a culturally machinist tradition which has imposed itself, encrusted since the Middle Ages. In this, kitsch is indeed the art of the artificial, of lying that touches all aspects of life, all behavior, it is the art of our paradoxical era and the victory of diversion.

We all need the sham as a lying beautifying mirror. In short, kitsch is the lie that reveals the truth of our societies lost in the illusion of its management. We no longer manage anything since we sided with the lie. And today's children intuitively feel that we are lying to them about their future and see our lack of courage in the face of adversity.

“The world to come will be like this. Technology acclimates us, trains us, deforms us, creates needs, models brains according to the machine of which man becomes a complement. »(Patrick Rambaud, *Siècle rebelle*, p. 198)

By reducing our desires to the only material horizon, Western technocracy also reduces our being to this single dimension. Even more, by locking him up in the present, in the immediacy of his existence, technocracy cuts the individual off from his historical journey and replaces the memory of humanity with a void, “our idea of the human being. ‘is entirely evaporated in favor of nothing”, a true“ ideology of rupture and amnesia ”(Plunkett, 1998). Such is Nietzsche's “last man”, incapable of recognizing himself. “Expressing yourself in a post-modern context means showing yourself off in your difference for the sake of difference even if you have nothing to say, especially if you have nothing to say.” (Carfantan)

“Why is the contemporary situation so uncertain? Because more and more we see developing in the Western world, a type of individual who is not the type of individual of a democratic society or of a society where we can fight for more freedom, but a type of individual who is privatized, who is locked in his small personal environment and who has become cynical about politics. “(Castoriadis, *The privatized individual*, *Le Monde diplomatique*, February 1998, p.23)

We are indeed inside a catastrophe of spiritual, socio-political and environmental origin, but above all psychic. In addition to the thread of our history, we lose the memory of our essence.

“We are witnessing the emergence of a new type of social organization that will meet the needs of a new species of human being. Science will be able to achieve what totalitarianisms (both political and religious) have vainly sought to create: a new man. (...) If we trust one



of the most famous actors of this movement, Raymond Kurtweil, author of a book entitled *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, it is the convergence of these technologies that will bring a radical transformation not only of man, but also of the whole sphere of life. » (Daniel Jacques, *Humanism in the Age of Spiritual Machines*)

Already, previously the philosopher Jean Brun in his work *Le Rêve et la Machine* enlightened us on the existential finality of this new messianic technology project by asserting : “Man aspires to a completely different reality allowing him to escape from himself and to free himself from his spatio-temporal armor ; this is the central idea around which the most diverse conceptions and achievements revolve. He seeks not only to project himself outside himself, but to operate a “synthetic” supercreation in a world in his image, that is to say typically artificial. (pp. 217-218)

“All my methods, all my means are sensible; it's my goal that's crazy.
“(Melville)

This word of Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick* reflects all the proud animosity of man and the almost satanic technical means he has implemented to bring nature (the white whale) in line.

“Apparently, humanity continues to devote itself to the sinister hunt described by Melville, drawn by adventure, the prospect of oil and whales, the inducements of pride, and above all by a pursuit of power that reject love. She also began to consciously contemplate the prospect of utter annihilation which may be brought about by today's captains at the head of the ship. “ (Mumford, *Le Mythe de la machine*, T. II, p.511)

The great German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, in *The Hour of Crime and the Time of the Work of Art*, analyzed Freud's theory, which indeed speaks of the great vexatious moments of history as so many painful moments that attack pride. to be and come to undermine his narcissistic shield. First, in the Renaissance, Copernicus and Galileo bring the painful vision of a humanity that is no longer the center of the Universe followed by Darwin who puts an end to the arrogant human “pride” against the animal kingdom by replacing the human in the chain of animal descent; thirdly, the anatomist vexation where the dissection of the body does not reveal any soul but rather shows a well-oiled

“mechanics” then the vexation of psychoanalysis, which highlights the discovery of the unconscious as a vexing moment towards the ego and the reason which believed themselves to be the sole masters of the destiny of being and ultimately totalitarian and nuclear vexation, “the era of the monstrous created by man”. All these annoyances put an end to the ultimate conviction that man could take the place of God. So many annoyances that have led to the disarray of the being, to the doubt of his destiny and destroys the narcissistic shell of the human being.



We are at the heart of contemporary nihilism. Not only are the traditional values of kindness, beauty, compassion and cooperation in doubt, but above all, nihilism is expressed in its inability to build new ones, to renew the pact of solidarity between people. We have lost the conviction that we can create meaning; it is the triumph of despair or oblivion. Man does not support his human condition because he covets absolute power while reason comes up against the reality of man in the face of nothingness, unable to grasp himself in the midst of nothing and everything, it is then that the man, stricken with existential despair, risks being engulfed by the radical insecurity of a world which escapes him in an endless flight.

The flight to the virtual - high-tech magazines announce the downloading of our neurons into cyberspace around 2030 - tell us that the natural and social environment is so degraded that it reveals our inability to find balance. Many are already thinking of leaving the ship because for them humanity is a bankruptcy on all levels, psychological, economic, political and especially ecological. Despite everything, reality remains the only original territory where freedom and our commitment are exercised. personal towards others.

“It is by throwing himself into the world, by suffering there, by struggling in it, that man gradually defines himself.” (Sartre)

We are at a crossroads or we accept the psychic discomfort of freedom in action or we sink into the totalitarian bondage of virtual worlds. Once again we are in the midst of the electronic millennial prophecy of eternal salvation. It is not a question of playing the technophobic Cassandra, but rather of quickly deciphering the secret codes of the messianic techno-shamanist presentations, because let us not forget: any transcendentalist ideology which promises an “exit from history, a going beyond death contains in germ an apocalypse which would be its apotheosis. (Haraway quoted in Virtual Speed, p.27) Exactly what a century of modern and contemporary art has shown us. The virtual universe he presented as the black hole of the XXIth century. ?

Conclusion.

Suddenly towards the end of the last century, the color gray made its appearance in contemporary art. It was for a long time held in discredit by the theoreticians of the color: “Gray is neutral, fruitless and without expression”, a kind of aestheticism of boredom. Gray is the color of acrary. Acrary as the inability of democracy to assume power and initiate strategies necessary for the major challenges of our development. The environment provides an eloquent example where everyone recognizes the gravity of the situation while proving unable to initiate the necessary corrective measures. Our democracies no longer project themselves into the future too absorbed in crisis management, crises caused by the negligence of these same governments which have governed in the past on a “small week” basis without promising projects for “tomorrow that sings” “.

According to painter Gerhard Richter, gray “is better than any other color at clarifying nothing. (Nothingness) There is in gray a notion of indifference which has the capacity to empty the surface of all meaning. It is the “color” of

atheism. Gray cuts short any emotional outpouring and corresponds to indifference. Gray is considered to be the “color” of extinction. Extinction of animal and plant species, extinction of the humanist fire of the Enlightenment, extinction of the “last man”. The aura of this new century is gray, colorless : a little white seeking to illuminate a very dark destiny. White, black, gray, it should be remembered, are non-colors. Even if we are currently stuck in a gray quagmire where we are unable to choose, a sort of kitsch artistic “melting pot”, a day will come when we will have to choose because existence has not said its last word. We will have to choose between the white on white of Malevich (Eros) or the black on black of Rodchenko (Thanatos) between life and death, utopia or dystopia, democracy or acrary.

What to do with this gray if not to start all over again for so long, Mondrian has understood it well, that human nature will not have found its harmony. All form has an end thus, art will disappear as life has more balance “then we will no longer need paintings or sculptures because we will live in the middle of the realized art. “(Mondrian)

Thus the Polish artist Opalka decided one day to paint the numbers from 1 to infinity on a black background while waiting for Mondrian’s wish to come true. With each new canvas, the background is sieved, diluted by 1% white, so are the numbers. The background of the canvases, from black to gray, moves towards white. This at the slow pace of the duration of an existence. Because to overturn this tragic world, shouldn’t the revealing act ennoble nothing as a whole ? But it will happen one day, for sure, that the background and the figures will unite in a dazzling white on white worthy of Malevich. Not an atomic white (light that kills) but a white which inscribes the metaphysical dimension of life.

“The 1 is an expanding whole”. It is this expanding time, this unique being that I exalt. Of course, as a man, I can fear death. But for my work, death means its culmination. I thought the end from the start. When I put the number “1”, the work was already there, already finished. I knew that only death could define the completion of my work. Time without death does not exist. It is an abstraction. Only the consciousness of death gives its reality to time. Death, that bitch, has become a collaborator, an instrument. I made a pact with her. She gave me the meaning of life, I gave her mine ” The projected white is undoubtedly the most literal embodiment of the idea of eternity and infinity already contained in the number 1.



Basically, does white on absolute white really exist? We’ll find out, you’ll find out soon.

1

To ignore your past is to condemn yourself to relive it



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